n

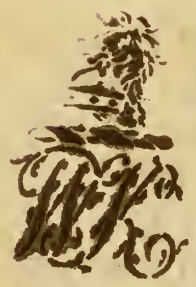
SCS #1908

B. 1 — 12

N

Thomas F. Torrance

SCS #1408



A—1. 21

THE late Reverend and Learned Mr. *Robert Fleming* is universally known to have been a Person of singular Worth and Piety, and his Works declare him a diligent and careful Observer of the Providences of God towards his Church and People. Many such instances, which no other Author has taken notice of, and which, were they not well attested, would appear almost incredible, are to be met with in his Book, call'd *The Fulfilling of the Scripture*. A Performance which has so far intituled itself to the esteem of all serious christians, as not to need our Recommendation. But as there is now printed an handsome Edition of this Work, in one Volume, which before was divided into three Parts, some of which are very scarce; together with some Account of his Life, taken from his own Diary, we could not, in Justice to the Performance, or Respect to the Author, refuse to recommend it to the World, Hoping and Praying that through the Divine Blessing, it may be made of great Service and Use to those who shall peruse it.

Matthew Clark,
W. Tong,
I. Watts,
Tho. Reynolds,
Tho. Bradbury,
John Hurrion,
Jenkin Lewis,
Robert Bragge,
Thomas Hall,
Thomas Ridgley,
Dan. Neal,
R. Wright,
John Cumming,
Joseph Hill,
Jabez Earl,
Pat. Russel,
James Wood,
Tho. Harrison.
John Asty,
Daniel Wilcox,
John Mitchel.

BOOKS published by Mr. *Fleming.*

1. THE confirming Work of Religion.
2. The Treatise of Earth-Quakes.
3. The one thing necessary.
4. The Truth and Certainty of the Protestant Faith.
5. The Epistolary Discourse, dedicated to Queen *Mary*. In two parts.
6. The Survey of Quakerism.
7. The present Aspect of the Times.
8. The healing work, written on the account of Divisions in *Scotland.*

N. B. *The abovementioned Books being the genuine Works of Mr.* Robert Fleming, *Sen. it is designed to print the same in one Volume, like this to complete his Works.*

THE

FULFILLING

OF THE

SCRIPTURE

COMPLETE;

In Three Parts.

Part I.

An Eſſay ſhewing the exact Accompliſhment of the Word of God in his Works of Providence, perform'd, and to be perform'd, for confirming Believers, and convincing the Atheists of the preſent Time. As alſo many rare Hiſtories of the Works and Servants of God in the Church of Christ.

Part II.

The Faithfulneſs of God conſider'd and clear'd, in the great Event of his Word.

Part III.

The great Appearances of God for his Church under the New Testament; with many choice Speeches of ſuffering and dying Christians.

By the late Reverend and Learned

Mr. *ROBERT FLEMING*, Sen.

TOGETHER WITH

Some Memoirs of the Author's Life; in a Sermon preached on the Occaſion of his Death. By the late Learned *Daniel Burgeſs*.

Collected into one Volume.

The Fifth Edition Corrected.

To which is added

An INDEX, Alphabetically digeſted, of all the principal Matters contained in the *Three Parts*; and at the Beginning of the Work a Table of *Scots Phraſes*, which often occur in reading Mr. *Fleming's*, Mr. *Rutherford's*, Mr. *Durham's*, and other *Scots* Author's Works.

LONDON:

Printed for J. and B. Sprint, at the *Bell*, and Aaron Ward at the *King's-Arms* in *Little-Britain*; Richard Ford, at the *Angel* in the *Poultry*, near *Stocks-Market*, and John Oswald at the *Bible* in *White's-Alley* in *Chancery-Lane*, M DCC XXVI.

A—

The SUBSCRIBERS *Names.*

A.

THE Rev. Mr John Asty.
Mr Joseph Astweek.
Mr Edward Austin.
— Joseph Ansely.
— George Anderson.
— Benjamin Allen.
— Abraham Adams.
— Joseph Alleine.
— James Annand.
— John Anderson.
— David Atchison.
— John Atchison.
Mrs Elizabeth Atkeson.

B.

The Rev. Mr Thomas Bradbury.
The Rev. Mr Robert Black, Minister of the *Scots* Church at *Rotterdam.*
The Rev. Mr Theodorus Bolten.
The Rev. Mr Ebenezer Bradshaw.
Mr John Brown.
— William Benford.
— Joseph Bradney.
— Edward Buckingham.
— John Brikmyre.
— John Boye.
— Samuel Bladon.
— James Blaikie.
— Joseph Bunny, of *Andover.*
— John Bigrave.
— Samuel Belsham.
— Benjamin Bond, Merchant.
— William Bently, Peruke maker in St. *Michael's Alley, Cornhil.*
— Joseph Baller.
— David Brown.
— Stephen Beasly.
— John Blachly.
— Thomas Buchanan.
— John Burrard.

C.

Mr Alexander Carstairs, Elder of the *Scoch* Church at *Rotterdam*
— Gabriel Van Charandan, Deacon of the *Scotch* Church at *Rotterdam.*
— Alexander Cochran, *ditto.*
Mrs Sarah Corfield.
Mr Samuel Cooke.
— William Calhoune, belonging to his Majesty's Houshold, *Scotland-Yard.*
— Charles Charlton
— Clifford Chitterford, 2 Books.
— Richard Collins.
— Stephen Carter.
— John Combe.
— John Cowthron.
Mr Clifford Clutterbuck.
— Stephen Clutterbuck.
— William Clarke.
Mrs Christian Cumming.
Mr Cheesbrook.
Mrs Margaret Crosby.
Mr Edward Cooper.
— Alexander Cumming.
Messr. John Clarke and Richard Hett, Booksellers, 7 Books.
Mr Alexander Crighton.
— Neal Carmichael.
— John Collins.
— James Cosin.
— George Cook.
— John Cook.
— Edward Cripps.
— John Cuningham.
— Michael Cowan.
— David Crighton.
— Andrew Cowan.

D.

Mr William Danil, Yeoman of his Majesty's Kitchen.
— Joseph Dyer, of *London*, Jeweller.
— William Doby, Cheesmonger.
— William Dermer.
— Joseph Devenport.
— Nathan Dell.
— Thomas Duncan.
— William Dyker.

E.

The Rev. Mr John Enttie, Minister of the *Scotch* Church at *Rotterdam.*
Mr Thomas Elliot, Writer, in *Edinburgh.*
— William Elkins.
Mrs Abigail Edwin.
Mrs Mary Ellis.
Mr James Edge.
— Fra. Elliot.

F.

Mr Elias De Gruchy Fasset.
— Robert Falconer.
— Thomas Ferguson.
— James Falconer.
— William Ford.
— Isaac Feild.
— James Figgens.
— William Feast.
— Nehemiah Formantel.

G.

Mr John Gordon, Elder of the *Scotch* Church at *Rotterdam.*
— Henry Gould.
— James Gibson, 7 Books.

Mr. James Green, Gent.
— John Graham.
— Matthew Glover.
— George Gordon.
— Robert Gerton.
— Peter Gray.
— Thomas Goware.
— Thomas Gill.
— James Grier.
— William Gawler.
— Walter Graham.
— John Gilbert.
— William Gray.

H.

The Reverend Mr Joſeph Hill.
The Reverend Mr Thomas Hall, 7 Books.
The Reverend Mr Samuel Hoawey.
Mr Walter Hood, 7 Books.
Iſaac Honeywood of *Newington*, Eſq. 3 Books.
Mr Oliver Herne, of *Andover*.
— John Hutton.
— Henry Horn.
— John Hitchin.
— Thomas Hitchin.
— Samuel Howtyn.
— Cleeve Harriſon.
— Thomas Hollis, Jun.
Mr Hiatt.
— William Hoog.
— James Hutchiſon.
— George Hutchiſon.
— John Howſon.
— Charles Hannel.
— James Huips.
— John Hopley.
— Andrew Hood, at the white Peruke in *Lombard-ſtreet*, ſix Dozen and a half of Books.

J.

Mr John Juby.
— William Juſtis.
— Joſeph Jones.
— Samuel Johnſton, 2 Books.
— James Johnſton, Merchant.
— James Johnſton.

K.

The Reverend Mr Wm. King, S. M.
Mr James King.
— John Keen.
— John Knotts.
— John Kennedy.

L.

Mr Robert Latimer, Tobacconiſt, 2 Books.
Mr ——— Low, of *Hammerſmith*.
— Thomas Liſſonbey.
— William Legg, 4 Books.
— Fina Lamb.
Mrs Rutland Ladyman.
Mr John Ladyman.
— James Leman.
Mr Stephen Lye.
— Thomas Laidler.

M.

The Reverend Mr John Mitchel.
The Reverend Mr David Millar, of *Andover* in *Hampſhire*, 6 Books.
The Reverend Mr Henry Miles.
Mr John Martin.
— Richard Moth.
— John Morriſon.
— William Montgomery.
— Iſaac Mead.
— Alexander Millen.
— Frances Morrant.
— Aſahel Maſon.
— William Morburne.
— Charles Marſhal.
— Peter Murdoch, Merchant in *Glaſgow*.
— John Mackubin.
— James Mackubin.

N.

Mr Alexander Naughten.
— William Nelſon.
— John Norris.
— Henry Nelſon.

O.

Mr John Ormered, Surgeon.

P.

Mr John Patrick, 7 Books.
— John Pullen, 7 Books.
— Nathaniel Pullen.
— John Palmer.
— John Philips,
— Henry Pulley.
— John Platt.
— Richard Pye.
— Joſeph Poole.
— Charles Pomeroy.
— Joſeph Panton.
— John Powell.

R.

The Reverend Mr Thomas Ridgley, 2 Books.
The Reverend Mr Patrick Ruſſel, 3 Books.
The Reverend Lacland Roſs, M. A. of *Rockwood-hall* in *Eſſex*.
Mr Peter Rae, 7 Books.
— George Ring.
— James Roe.
— Thomas Rutherford, at *Berwick upon Tweed*, 2 Books.
— Richard Robiſone.

S.

The Reverend Mr Thomas Savill.
Mr Ralph Smith.
Mrs Martha Sprew.
Mr Richard Sharp.
— William Staples, Junior.
— William Smith.
— Thomas Stratton.
— John Smart.
— John Slatter.

Mr James

Mr James Scot.
— John Savidge.
— John Syrett.
— Joſeph Shanks.
— Robert Storie.
— John Slaney.
— John Sawyer.
— Alexander Sutor.
— John Seager.
— Thomas Smith.
— William Smith.

T.

Mr ——— Thomſon, Tobacconiſt.
— James Tod, Merchant.
— Thomas Tweddale.
Edmund Thorp, M. D.
Mr Nathaniel Tyler.
— John Travers.
— William Turnbull.
— Joſeph Taylor.
— Benjamin Tomkins.
— John Tuſtin.
— Andrew Turner.

V.

De' Heer John Van-Meel, Burger Maſter, and one of the Elders of the *Scotch* Church at *Rotterdam*.

W.

The Reverend Mr Daniel Wilcox.
The Reverend Mr Samuel Wilſon.
Mr Jaſper Watters, Linnen-Draper in *Cornhill*.
The Reverend Mr George Weggett.
Mr James Waldon.
— John Welſh, Junior.
— William Welſh, Apothecary.
— Joſeph Wakeford, of *Andover*, Mercer.
— Henry Weſt, 6 Books.
— Robert Walker,
— John Watts
— Thomas Whitehead.
— James Ward.
— Thomas Walker.
— Benjamin Webb.
— Joſeph Warren.
— James Weſton, at the Hand and Pen in *Woodſtreet*, Maſter of Short-hand, 3 Books.
— Charles Warrender.

Y.

Mr John Young.

A Table of *SCOTS* Phraſes.

A.

Anent, concerning, of, or about.
Airth, a point of the heavens.
Awband, to reſtrain, or have command of a thing.
Awſome, frightful, or aſtoniſhing.
Arles, earneſt given for ſomething bought.
Ay, always.

B.

Blink, to ſhine for a ſhort time.
Buſked, dreſſed, or adorned.
Brash, to have a fit of ſickneſs.
Bire, to ſpring out of the ground.
Bleat, to be ſhamefaced, modeſt, or ſhy.
Bonny, beautiful or comly.
Bairne, a child.
Bod, a ſign of good or evil to come.
Brea, the brow of a hill, or bank of a river.
Braly, bravely, or finely.
Bruke, to live and enjoy any comfort of life.
Ban, to curſe or ſwear.
Blythe, pleaſant, or glad hearted.
Bragg, to boaſt or ſtump of any thing.
Benn, to be admitted to the greateſt familiarity.
Beid, behoved, or obliged to do.
Benſail, with force and vigour.
Bourd, is to ſport or be merry.

C.

Cautioner, to be ſurety, or engage for a perſon.
Coldrife, to be lukewarm or indifferent.
Caſt in a rame, caſt in a mould.
Canny, good humored, or ſometimes ſaving.
Challenge, to accuſe or charge a perſon.
Caſt out, to fall out or diſagree.
Compet with one, to match or equal them.
Caſt, to vomit, or ſpew.
Caption, is a writ againſt a perſon to ſeize them.

D.

Douncaſting, grieved, or ſorrowful.
Depone, to depoſe, or ſwear as a witneſs.
Datyd, to be indulged.
Daft, unwiſe.
A **Dybour**, a bankrupt.
Dyke, a wall or fence.
Dozy, pettiſh, or croſs.
A **Daw**, is an ill houſewife.
Dzierp, frightful, or ſad and mouruful.

Dumly

Dumly waters, is muddy or troubled waters.
Dwine, to languiſh, or pine away.
Dang, beat, or ſtricken, &c.
Dolweed, mourning apparel.
Decreet, judgment, or ſummons as a writ.
Dittay, is either accuſation or condemnation.
Downot, cannot abide.

E.

Eild, is age.
Eyd, is earth.
Een, is eyes.

F.

Feckleſs, littleworth, or weak.
Faſhry, trouble, or moleſtation.
Friſt, to truſt money, or the like.
Flyte, to ſcold, or be angry.
Flit, the moving of houſhold goods.
Fireflaught, lightning.
Frae, is from.
Farlies, is novelties or wonders.
Fell, to kill, or ſlay.

G.

Gloom, to look ſower, or unpleaſant.
Glour, to ſtare with ones eyes.
Gyp, to hold faſt, or pinch a thing.
A **Gyve**, one that overſees workmen.
Ganſell, to upbraid a Perſon to whom we give a gift.
A **Geek**, is a fool, ſometimes uſed for the cuckow.
Greet, is to cry, or weep.
Geer, is goods of any ſort.

H.

Haind, ſaved.
Hamly, familiar, or free.
Hearaway, this way, or to be in this life.
Haſſ, embrace, or hug in ones arms.
Hock a holl, dig a pitt.
Hooly, is ſoftly, or ſlow.

I.

Jouke, is to ſtoop and ſhun a blow.
Ilka one, every one.

K.

Ken, to know a perſon or thing.
Knak, the way of a thing.
Knagg, is a pin to hang a thing upon.
Kirk is commonly call'd the Church of *Scotland*.
Kythe, to ſhow, or make a thing appear.

L.

Lawbiding, to be able to anſwer a charge.
Lawbarrows, bound over to good behaviour.
Leel, true, or honeſt.
Lippen, to truſt or rely on any promiſe.
Loun, is rogue, or knave.
A **Lith**, a joint of the body.

M.

Mickel, much, or great.
Misken, not to know a perſon or thing.
Midſes, means.
Moyen, is to make friends.

N.

Notour, noted.
Nek-nak, a toy, or thing of ſmall value.
Niffer, to exchange one thing for another.

O.

Outgeat, deliverance, or freedom from bondage.
Outleting, leting forth, or breathing upon.

P.

Put out, to exert, or put forth.
Pyg, to ſtand hard, or ſcrew hard.
Pickel, a grain of ſeed, or ſmall quantity.
Pakey, cunning, or ſubtile.

R.

Rive, to tear, or burſt aſunder.
Roup, is to ſell by auction.
Rype, is to ſearch for any thing ſtolen.
Reek, is a ſmoak, or ſmother.
Ruſed, commended.

S.

Speer, to ask, or inquire for a thing.
Scaille, to ſeparate, or be diſmiſs'd.
Sturt, turbulent, or contentious.
Stown'd, a ſtich, or pain.
Spunk, a ſpark of fire among aſhes.
Skaith, harm, or loſs.

T.

Tryſt, to appoint or meet to do buſineſs.
Tine, to loſe, or drop any thing.
Trow, I believe, or I know.
Thrie, is to hold an argument ſtifly.
Twin, to ſeparate, or part.
Tack, to catch.
Thrawbearing, to be provided for.

U.

Uptake, to underſtand a thing.

W.

Wont, uſed, or cuſtomary to do.
Win thither, to get thither.
Wir, little, or ſmall.
Wight, ſtrong, or clever.
Won at, attain'd to.
Wear out, to decline, or apoſtatize.
Wailed, picked, or choſen.
Wares, goods of any ſort that are to be ſold.
Weel-wared, money laid out to advantage.
Werſh, unſavory, it needeth ſalt.
Warrant, is to ſpeak with a caution and proof.

Y.

Yule, is Chriſtmas.
Yeald, Barren, or dry.

A Funeral

The Church's Triumph over DEATH.

A

Funeral SERMON

PREACHED

Upon the Deceaſe of the bleſſed Mr. ROBERT FLEMING, late Paſtor of a Church in *Rotterdam.*

By *DANIEL BURGESS.*

To the Right Worſhipful

Sir *HENRY ASHHURST*, Bar^t.

SIR,

HERE is a frenzy abroad, of which Men do together *adore the pipes, and neglect the fountain.* Make great court to his *miniſters*, and ſlight the King, the King eternal. Worſhipping the *ſtars that do lead to Chriſt*, and crucifying to themſelves afreſh, *the Chriſt that they lead unto*; yea, by unbelief and diſobedience, putting him to open ſhame. But, *I muſt hope better things of you.* And believe it to be your love of Chriſt, that conſtrains you to receive a *Paul*, and an *Appollos*, as an *angel of God*, yea, as *Chriſt himſelf.*

Wherefore, as your extraordinary kindneſs to another *renowned ſaint* hath been told to the world by incomparable pens; I do reſolve, that *whereſoever this ſermon ſhall be read*, your like affection to our heavenly *Fleming* ſhall have its memorial.

By Mr. *Baxter* ὁ πάνυ, and by Dr. *Bates* in Dedicat. Epiſtles.

Very deeply I am impreſſed with your favours done unto both: for their love was eminent, and much exceeded the fame of it, to a man *born to reproach.* And not pretending to be richer than his brethren, in any other treaſure.

A love to be wondered at; had it not been ſo known, that *God is love.* And that, therefore, *love is godlineſs.* And, *where godlineſs abounds, loving-kindneſs over flows.* As we ſee in angels, they do flagrantly love the leaſt of *Abraham*'s children. And highly honour the meaneſt of ſanctified worms.

As for the former, *Jonathan* muſt needs have known his *David*; and the world will by and by have his life *in Folio* to read. And, as concerning the latter, as little as any man do you need to be told, with what *a fulneſs of God* he was fill'd. *Sir*, your wondring eyes were your witneſſes. The great love he bare you, gave you more than common knowledge of him; whoſe *humility* and *modeſty* hid him ſo, that he was not much known, unto thoſe that knew him moſt. As *Ezekiel* ſpeaks of other angels, *his wings ſo covered his feet.* However, ſo much you ſaw, that, as very well you might, you ſingularly loved him. And eſteemed his love unto you, to be of that kind which is moſt valuable next unto God's own love.

For the information of others, ſomewhat is ſaid of this *man of God*, in the following pages. Whereto I can add this, which was ſaid of the famous *Antonine*; *he hath this praiſe crowning all the reſt, that he hath no gain-ſayer of his praiſes*. I hear not of any *duſt* to be blown off from this diamond.

Honoured Sir,

Two or three of your letters to me, bewailed the world's loſs, the Church's, and your own, in the departure of holy *Fleming*. Nor do I doubt, but the beſt of the Church and world, do lay it to heart. Even, generally, all that hear, how much *light*, and *ſalt*, and *balm*, is taken from a needy age,

Commemoration of ſaints departed, on Heb. xiii. 7.

For your relief and others, this is all in this place to be ſaid. It is elſewhere ſhewn, how we may hold *departed ſaints* in our ſight, and in our ſervice. If the courſe there preſcribed be duly followed, I am certain that the ſaint's death ſhall not be *only his own gain*: but his *aſcenſion* to Heaven, ſhall be made to further our *converſation* therein. And notably contribute unto the *victory*, *joy*, and *triumph*, of faith, which this ſermon deſcribes.

Thereto I diſmiſs you, without any ſallies of *flattery*; the common *ſin* and *ſcandal* of dedications. It muſt be confeſſed, that if all praiſe of Sir *Henry Aſhhurſt* be flattery, *Old England* and *New*, are over-run with that *leproſy*. And, the *Iſraelites* are much more ſick of its plague, than the *Egyptians* be. The name of *Aſhhurſt* was left richly perfum'd by your excellent *father*. And, I hear not but it is ſo kept by your ſelf and your honourable *brother*. Otherwiſe, you had before this time loudly heard of it. For they do ſink deepeſt, who fall from pinacles higheſt; *they who were at firſt the leſt angels, are now the worſt devils*, ſaith *Du Moulin*. And by the *Old Law*, you had been condemned *to be burnt* for the *profanation* of ſuch a father's *name*. *Lev.* xxi. 9.

Sir William A. *Lord-Mayor.*

Comprehenditur cum filia filius, &c. *Calv.*

Surely the *ſun* muſt have looked pale, and the *ſpheres* have caſt out their *ſtars*, if ſuch as *You* and my *Lord* had forſaken your God, and the God of your fathers! and had left no beeter to be ſaid of you, than *Philoſtratus* ſays of *Perinthius*; *barely, that he was the ſon of* Rufus.

But, Sir, as you very well know, my *office* is to bring *low* all *mountains and hills*; not, the contrary. And, as my own heart ſweetly knows, my *ambition* is to *edify*, not *magnify* you; to ſerve your *faith*, not your *fame*; which as it leſs needs it, doth leſs deſerve it. Much rather would I *provoke you to one good work, than make known all that ever you did*. And be the meaneſt *inſtrument* to make you a *better* man, than a *trumpet* to proclaim you a *good* one.

Plain dealing is a jewel; and will appear ſo one day, though now there be much more of it at the *mill* than about the *throne*. And, I do account that earthly-gods themſelves are ſeldom ſo richly treated, as my friends that be entertained with theſe *complements*. Sc. That *Baronets muſt periſh without the new-birth*. That, *a repenting* Lazarus *is of better eſtate than a joyal* Dives. That, *a grain of holy faith is worth more than a mountain of pure gold*. That, *in the day of judgment, Chriſt will be aſhamed of the greateſt, that are now aſhamed of chriſtianity*. That *royal heads, honourable, and worſhipful ones, muſt worſhip God's majeſty, or bear his fury*! That, *there is no ſafety for the higheſt on earth, without truſt in the moſt High in heaven*. That, *they ſhall ſuffer eternal death, who love not Chriſt Jeſus above the richeſt life*. That, *no greatneſs can ſave them from vengeance, who deny Chriſt reverence*. That, *whatever their rank is in this world, their portion ſhall be everlaſting ſhame, who do not all that they do to God's glory*. That, *the moſt proſperous who will not ſubmit to God's afflicting hand, ſhall not eſcape his revengeful hand!* That, *if they love not their enemies, and bleſs them that curſe them, and do good to them that hate them, and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe them and perſecute them; they ſhall not be the children of God*. Finally, that, *whoſoever of them ſhall live without dying thoughts, he ſhall die without living comforts!*

S I R,

My prayers ceaſe not to aſcend for *you*, your pious *conſort*, and eminently hopeful *branches*: may *you* ever be more and more *honours* to them; and *they* be more and more *joys* unto you. May neither of *you*, now *ſleep in the afternoon*; for to that time of day it is come in your lives! And may both of *them have their noon and evening anſwerable to their fair morning*. May *ſelf-denial* be your and their *buſineſs*; without which all religion is

but your *play*: may your *prosperity* nether *slay*, or so much as *wound* you; in your eye may the *paradises* which have no *tree of life* in them be contemned, though they are possessed. May great *roots* under ground make you great *trees* above it; rich *truth in the inner parts* make you *rich in good works*. May you prefer *heaven* above *earth*, as manifestly as others prefer it above *hell!* not accounting your selves to have much *profited in christianity*, till you count that you have nothing else to profit much in. And always remembring, that if you *take not the kingdom of heaven by force*, the kingdom of hell will take you by it May *the mercy of the Lord rest upon the family of the* Ashhursts, *and his righteousness be to their childrens children.*

Under many obligations, and in sweet hopes, thus prayeth;

S I R,

Your honourer, and humble servant,

DANIEL BURGESS.

A SERMON on the Death of Mr. *Robert Fleming.*

COR. XV. 55, 56, 57.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?
The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.
But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Πῦ σῦ, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρν, πῦ σῦ, ᾅδη, τὸ νῖκος·
Τὸ δὲ κέντρον τῦ θανάτν, ἡ ἁμαρτία· ἡ δὲ δὺναμις τὴς ἁμαρτίας, ὁ νόμος.
Τῷ δὲ Θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νῖκ@· διὰ τῦ Κυρίς ἡμῶν Ἰησῦ Χριστῦ.

Ubi est aculeus tuus, O mors? Ubi est victoria tua, inferne? *Syriac.* Ubi suprema vis tua, O mors? *Arabic.* Ubi igitur mortis victoria? Ubi igitur mortis stimulus? *Æthiopic.*

UPON this mournful occasion I present this text as a pearl-cordial and the most restorative that I could find in the divine dispensatory.

Wonderful words it consists of, such as seem too high to be uttered below heaven, and too soon spoken before the resurrection.

But what heavenly scribe wrote them, you do all know; and with how like a boldness and bravery of faith our holy *Fleming* did use to sing them, all of you are not ignorant.

They are made the theme of this discourse for this end, that they may also become, our song in the house of our pilgrimage.

There are obvious in them; A triumphant song, *v.* 55. A justifying reason, *v.* 56. An holy gratulation, *v.* 57.

A tri-

A triumphant ſong, wherein Rhetorick hath even exhauſted it ſelf; ſuch is the melody of its *Proſopopœia*, ſpeaking to death and the grave, as perſons and not things: ſuch is the pungency of its *interrogation*, which doth not here doubt, but upbraid and inſult: ſuch the elegancy of the *Meioſis*, covering the biggeſt part of its meaning, asking no more than what is become of their power to hurt, though meaning, that both are made to work for good: ſuch is the glory of the *Celeuſma* and ſhout, wherein victory, faith, and joy, as above expreſſion, are publiſhed in form of admiration.

O death where is thy ſting? O grave where is thy victory? O death! O grave! our one enemy bearing theſe two names, once ſo ſtrong as to conquer all, and ſo cruel as to ſpare none; once a dragon that ſwallowed up the world! an *Abaddon* and *Apolluon* of Jewiſh world and gentile! Chriſtian faith now dares to look thee in the face, and ask, in *Zebul*'s words to *Gaal*, *Where is now thy mouth?* I proclaim thee to be as the beaſt in the revelation, which *was and is not*; yea, as a corrected viper, of an horrid poiſon to be made a ſovereign medicine! of a king of terrors to be made a gracious prince of peace; the loathſom priſon of thy grave to be turned to a quiet bed-chamber; and thy ſepulchers to be no more *hell's gates*, but heaven's porches.

Camero in Myrother. in Mat. xvi. 18.

It is true, thou retaineſt power to kill the bodies of ſaints; but having ſo done thou canſt do no more: and what is it that thou doſt therein? thou killeſt, but makes not an end of them: thou cureſt them of ſin, their loathſom diſeaſe; and art a real Saviour, and but a ſeeming deſtroyer.

Power indeed thou haſt, ſometimes to affrighten ſouls. *Abraham* our father was affrighted by thee, *Gen.* xii. *David* the valiant was ſcared, 1 *Sam.* xxi. Miſerably thou didſt terrify upright *Ezekiah*, *Iſa.* xxxviii. And *Peter*'s magnanimity vaniſhed at a ſhadow of thee, *Mat.* xxvi But *egregiam laudem, ſpolia ampla!* Is this thy praiſe? To affrighten is no more than every ſhaddow can do; and what is more inglorious than a bug-bear that is harmleſs? thy affrightning believers ſpeak much weakneſs in them, but not any ſtrength in thee.

It is confeſſed, as for thy appearance, it is as a curſe and not a bleſſing. Thou comeſt with a warrant in thy hand from the ſupreme king, and irreſiſtably turneſt all fleſh into deſtruction. Upon thy devouring ſword chriſtians do read ſin's terrible mark, though *Socinian* eyes ſee nothing but mere Nature's. *Punctura peccati morimur*, is the ſaints motto: They believe thee ſent from their God to execute wrath on their ſins; and full often do fear thee to inflict it on their ſouls; ſo much do thy cruel hands look like God's vindictive ones: but *ſimillimum non eſt idem.* And what art thou, O death, but as the end of plants and brutes, and the ruin of ſinners, ſo the grain of believers? ſuch a gain as paſſeth underſtanding, and maketh their holy faith to proclaim thee more than a ſpoiled ſpoiler, even a good and faithful ſervant become unto them; a ſervant unto thy old ſervants, who were all their days ſubject to bondage through fear of thee; all the days of their Chriſtleſs eſtate ſubject to bondage: but now that they are Chriſt's, thou, O death, art theirs! Thy name hath a place in the inventory of their goods, 1 *Cor.* iii. Feed on then upon thy *Egyptians*, Pſal. xlix. 14. But know, O *Pharaoh* and thy *Princes!* O death and thy harbingers! *the heads of* Leviathan *are broke in pieces, they are given to be meat to Iſraelites inhabiting the wilderneſs*, Pſal. lxxiv. 14.

If it be inſolently ſaid, that this triumph is too loud; that death is the fear of none but little ſouls, and deſerves not ſo lofty a ſong; or that it is not yet ſo dead but that it has ſting enough left to pinch and pain, and poiſon its moſt exulting victors; and ſtrength enough to hold them in its dungeon till the reſurrection. This mouth of infidelity is preſently ſtopped. Here follows,

A juſtifying reaſon, ſuch as clears the triumph from the charge of abſurdity. It is confeſſed, if death were but it ſelf, and not *Pars minima ſui*, it would be unworthy of the honour of being inſulted over; it would be an inſect of an inconſiderable ſting, if not a perfect drone. An enemy too deſpicable to be triumphed over with harp and pſaltery; nor would chriſtians blow a trumpet for the overthrow of a waſp. But death's name is *Legion*, and as it's an hoſt of enemies in one, it is a formidable one.

The ſting of death is ſin, q. d. ſin is the whole element of evil, it is all the evil of doing: nothing beſide is evil eſſentially, or meritoriouſly This hell of ſin being infuſed into death, makes it ſelf like it ſelf; even the whole element of miſery, and all the evil of ſuffering; where then, if not here, ſhall be found a trophy for faith? here, in death envenomed by ſin: by ſin, whereof a ſpark made devils of the moſt bleſſed creatures. And no more than the imputed guilt made the ever-living God to ſweat blood! ſeems this to be a paradox? hear then;

The

The ſtrength of ſin is the law, q. d. No wonder that ſin is ſo pernicious a thing; for the curſe of the divine law is on it: And who can think what is God's power, or his law's terror? His law muſt be like himſelf, as in its precepts and promiſes, ſo in its threats. The puniſhments of ſo great a king muſt neceſſarily be great; the breach of his law's duty can deſerve no leſs than extremity and eternity of miſery; and the curſe laid upon it is no leſs. No marvel then that ſin's guilt maketh an hell of death, being the law's curſe maketh ſin a worſe thing than death or hell; an evil that hell it ſelf muſt have all eternity to puniſh.

But over both law and ſin *God giveth us the victory*. As fiery as this law is, Chriſt's blood quencheth it: as boiling a furnace it makes of ſin, it cannot make ſin to be the death of a believer's ſoul. Theſe, the worſt of enemies, are firſt ſlain: for upon our firſt believing Chriſt's righteouſneſs is imputed, and by that imputation the law's curſe and ſin's condemnation are removed. Over them we have triumph ſounded, *Rom.* vii 4. *Ye are dead to the law by the body of Chriſt.* And, *ver.* 24, 25 *Who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Death's dominion is therefore at an end, though its power to kill the moſt holy body, and to retain the moſt ſacred duſt for a time, be not taken from it. In ſhort, the grace of Chriſt hath made ſin a broken enemy, the law a kind friend, and death an uſeful ſervant. Doth the ſaints triumph therefore precede or exceed victory? let the wiſe judge.

When *Iſrael* was brought through the *Red-Sea*, what ſongs of praiſe were ſtraitway ſung? though they had an howling *Deſart* to be paſſed through, and were not preſently in *Canaan*. Their ſongs injected terror to the dukes of *Edom*, and the mighty men of *Moab*. Yea, the *Greeks* no ſooner heard the articles of peace purchaſed for them by *Titus Flaminius*, but they cried Σώτηρ. Σώτηρ, a Saviour, a Saviour. And with ſuch ſhouts of joy, as made the air to ring, and the birds to drop down aſtoniſhed! A deep lethargy it is that maketh chriſtians joy to be leſs, while there reaſon for it is infinitely more: that reſtrains them from ſuch triumph, as ſhould make the infidel world to tremble. *Plutarch in vit. T. Flam.*

But O where ſhall offerings, and whole burnt-offerings be found? for this victory, this inchoate one, *Lebanon is not ſufficient, or the cattel upon a thouſand hills.* But, as *Jehoſhaphat* in *Berachah*, the ſaints throughout the earth do bleſs the captain of their ſalvation and conqueſt. The next verſe and breath, is

An holy gratulation. A lovely heaven of it, in a little globe of words.

Thanks be to God! To the Father, Son, and Spirit, our one God, be all holy obedience! whereof gratitude is the principal part; that which contains and animates all. Laws bind to obedience, and benefits unto thankfulneſs. But God our Law-giver is in all things our benefactor. His very laws, all, are benefits. To him be therefore all obedient thankfulneſs and all thankful obedience! to him,

Who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Of his ſaints victory, we publiſh the *truth*. We declare his gift of grace, to be the *original*. We teſtify the *limitation* of this gift, unto believers only; and the *extent* of it, unto all believers. As well to babes in the cradle of chriſtianity, as the oldeſt *Mnaſon's* in God's kingdom. We proclaim the never to be forgotten *Purchaſer* of it, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Whoſe *death* gave the angel of death his mortal wound. Whoſe *reſurrection* certified and exemplified believers. Whoſe *righteouſneſs*, by faith received, inſtateth them in the power of an endleſs life. Whoſe *ſanctifying Spirit* mortifieth ſinful luſts, which be not the leaſt ſtings of death. Whoſe *comforting Spirit* takes out the pain and anguiſh that ſin ſticketh into our ſouls. And whoſe *glorious appearing* one day, will fulfill his old word to a tittle; *O death I will be thy plague, O grave I will be thy deſtruction!*

Waving all others, the argument I take hence, is this.

Holy believers on Chriſt, do rejoice in their victory over death. Truly, righteouſly, and holily, they rejoice in their ſalvation by Chriſt. They ſing, *O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?* &c.

The plural number in which he ſpeaks, may aſſure us that the apoſtle ſung in conſort: *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory.* And it ſhall be ſhown, that this text is all the holy catholick church's ſong. Which while militant, is ſo far triumphant We may ſay of death, and of all enemies in combination with it, as St. *John* ſaith of the world, *Whoſoever is born of God, overcometh them. And this is the victory that overcomes them, even our faith.* Conſequently, he *that overcometh ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond death,*

muſt take it for his duty, and make it his practice, *to joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of his ſalvation.*

But leſt, with the *Dogs*, I ſhould ſhut *children* out of the church-doors, and wound any that have already the arrows of the Almighty ſticking in them, I muſt premiſe two things.

Obſtructions are allowed for. It is not affirmed, that all, or any believers, do always rejoice. Full oft they are hindred, by bodily maladies, by mental miſtakes, by Satan's buffetings, and by divine deſertion. Under which, their *harp is turned to mourning, and their organ into the voice of them that weep.* And ſecondly,

Degrees be wondrouſly different. Of them that ſing triumph; the voice of ſome is as thunder, which all hear; the voice of others is ſcarcely audible whiſper. Some have but a drop of oil of joy; others, in compariſon, a very ſea of it.

However, this is aſſerted of all believers. The joy of faith is the chief joy of every ſort of them. Of them that want it none dare to ſlight it. None can reſt or be very eaſy, till they have it. The new nature in them panteth for it, *as the hart panteth after th water-brooks.* And as oft as they get from under the foreſaid obſtructions,

§. 1. *Believers do truly rejoice in their victory over death.*

Here examples ſhall ſhow that they do ſo, and reaſons ſhall ſatisfy why they muſt ſo do.

The time would fail to tell of *Abraham*, foreſeeing the day and work of his victorious Lord, and rejoicing in it. Of *Jacob*, cheering himſelf under heavieſt preſſures, with the ſame comforting proſpect. Of *Job*, inſulting over death, and glorying in his aſſurance of a bleſſed reſurrection. Of *David*, proclaiming that his God *would not leave him in death:* and that *he would fear no evil, when he walk'd through the valley of its ſhadow.*

The heart of the ſaints of the *Old Teſtament*, is to be ſeen in the *ſong of Solomon.* Hear it uttering it ſelf to the Lord Jeſus; *we will be glad and rejoice in thee:* In thee, that is, by whoſe ſtripes we are healed. In thee on whom the Lord hath laid the iniquities of us all, and by the faith of whom he juſtifieth us. In thee to whom a portion is divided with the great, and does divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong, as the evangelical prophet ſpeaks. *We will remember thy redeeming love more than wine: I ſat down under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet to my taſte.* Conſults, with theſe *manifeſto's*, the pſalms and ſongs of his father *David.* It ſhall appear, that the church was dancing for joy, *before the day broke, and the ſhadows flew away*, and the Son of righteouſneſs aroſe with the light and glory of the *New Teſtament.*

Under which, who needs to be told, what a ſpirit of joy was preſently poured out? *Glad tidings of great joy*, the heavenly heralds called the goſpel. Where-ever it comes, a torrent of joy follows it. *Gladly it is received*, at its firſt publication, though with the loſs of all things adventured. *Philip* preaches it at *Samaria*, and *there is great joy in all the City. We glory in tribulations: we rejoice with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory: we are more than conquerours. We are always confident, and willing rather to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord. We are —— always rejoicing. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.* Thus ſpeak the Apoſtles, as well of their converts as of themſelves.

And what ſaith *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory* of the ages ever ſince? The ſame ſpirit of joy and gladneſs hath been in all times of the church: they that have loved the Lord Jeſus, have rejoiced in him. And in his name have wiſhed for death, have welcomed it, and have been unterrified with its moſt gaſtly ſhapes and pomps. *Polycarp* deſires his executioners to let him ſhew them, that he could burn at a ſtake without being tied to it. *Lutius*, thanketh a barbarous judge for the favour of ſending him to his God and Father. *Cyprian*, thanks God for his Goal-delivery by death. *Hilarion* cries, Out of this body O my ſoul! what, is there any thing for thee to fear? for thee, an old ſervant of Chriſt! but to come nigher our own days. *Cranmer* thruſts his right-hand into the fire, to be revenged on it for ſubſcribing *a damned ſcroll*, as he call'd it, for fear of death. Think you that I have not learned to die? ſaid *Adam Damlip* Be at my burning, you ſhall ſee and ſay, There's a ſoldier of Chriſt, ſaid *Kirby. Ridley* called his death his wedding. And *Latimer* told the Biſhop going before him to the ſtake, he would have after him as faſt as he could: and when fire was put to him, with a ſmiling face, he uttered theſe words, *God is faithful, who doth not ſuffer us to be tempted above our ſtrength. Bainam*, in the fire profeſſed he felt no more pain than on a bed of downs.

downs. Death in the moſt hideous ſhapes, hath been thus triumphed over. Clouds of inſtances are to be read, even in Engl ſh books.

And do we not know multitudes of ſurviving friends and neighbours, whom we diſcern to be of the mind of the martyr, *Adam Wallack*? If death be ready, we are ready. Bleſſed be God this age is not forſaken by him, but that there are multitudes to whom Chriſt s word is verified; *Your heart ſhall rejoice, and your joy ſhall no man take from you.*

Is it yet, with any of you, an hard ſaying, which holy *Hilderſam* hath written? *He that doth not deſire, and ſtrive to be willing to die, he hath cauſe to ſuſpect that there is no true ſaving grace in him.* Or that harmonious paſſage of great *Calvin* on *Hebrews* ii. 14. *He that is not able to quiet his heart in holy contempt of death, let him know that he hath made but little progreſs in the faith of Chriſt. For as exceſſive fear of death ariſeth from ignorance of the grace of Chriſt, ſo it is a ſure ſign of unbelief.* Or, that of Dr. *Hammond* on 1 *Tim.* i 15. *If the converſion of a ſinner be not accompanied with unwonted joy and ſorrow, a godly ſenſe of paſt aiſtreſs, and a godly triumph for his delivery, I counſel not to diſtruſt but to fear; to a ſolicitous, though not a ſuſpicious trembling.* Let me add one more of Mr. *Ward* of *Ipſwich; If we had but half the ſtrength of St.* Paul's *faith, or life of his hope, or fore-imaginations which he had of his future felicity, we could not but have the ſame deſires and longings for our fruition of them.* I think few truths to be more evident. But it's poſſible that theſe following reaſons may add to its evidence.

Theſe reaſons I give, why believers muſt needs rejoice in their victory over death.

Firſt, Believers are men: and it is *the nature of man* to rejoice in his moſt deſired good, when he knows it to be obtained.

Victory over death is certainly moſt deſired, and the obtained good of believers. And, ordinarily, they do know themſelves to have obtained it, through Chriſt their Lord. For, the *law of grace*, through faith they do underſtand. Their own *acts of grace*, by ſenſe they do perceive. And, their *ſtate of grace*, by reaſon they do infer. And *the ſpirit which is of God they do receive, whereby they know the things which are freely given them of God*, 1 *Cor.* ii 12. What our Saviour, in his days on earth, ſaid to the ears of ſome, the Holy Ghoſt ſaith now to believers hearts, *Be of good chear, your ſins are forgiven: witneſſing with their ſpirits, that they are the children of God*, Rom. viii 16. Not only enlightning their minds to ſee the truth of their graces, and thence to conclude themſelves in a ſtate of grace; but, *verbis mentalibus*, by ſecret ſpiritual words, by internal myſterious whiſpers, teſtifying unto them that they are in that bleſſed ſtate. For, the matter witneſſing is more than enabling a perſon to read his evidence. In *Weſtminſter-hall* he would not be taken for a witneſs, who ſhould do no more than hold a candle to one reading his evidence. But the Holy Ghoſt the Comforter is expreſly named a *witneſs* to believers, of their being taken into the number, and being bleſs'd with all the privileges of the ſons of God.

Ordinarily, therefore, I ſay, that believers do know the cauſe of joy that they have. Though, as hath been aforeſaid, times of deſertion there are, in which they know it not. And it is moſt certain, the heavenly Comforter, doth not at all times comfort. Nor is joyful aſſurance, of the very eſſence of juſtifying ſaving faith. But, by reaſon of fore-named obſtructions, children of light may ſit all their days in the dark and in the deeps: and aſcend to heaven at laſt, in a thick cloud. Otherwiſe, we do all generally believe and teach, that the ſpirit of adoption being given unto ſons, as ſons of God, he is given unto every child of God: and, commonly, they do know themſelves conquerors, who are in Chriſt, and are not reprobate, unſound chriſtians.

This being admitted, they muſt be dead, and not *lively ſtones*, as St. *Peter* calls them, if they rejoice not. They muſt ceaſe to be men, if they become not joyful ones. They muſt be ſtupified, as ſoon as juſtified and adopted. For the human nature hath an inſeperable inſtinct and power; which on good tidings heard, doth tranſport minds and bodies into expreſſions of gladneſs. Diffuſing ſpirits, and by them ſending forth the news; trying it as it were, by communicating, to multiply it. *Gaudio, cogendi vis ineſt*; The Roman orator ſays, all men feel it: joy enters with a violence, with a grateful violence, that we are not able to reſiſt, breaks forth from us. Who thinks that *David* was able to forbear his dance before the ark? Or, that the healed *Cripple* could contain himſelf from running, leaping, and praiſing God? We have read of them who have died of joy: and it is true which one ſaith, *Should believers have the degrees of aſſurance, which imprudently they do ſometimes deſire, they muſt preſently die for joy, or be kept alive by miracle.* In ſhort then;

Believers muſt put off nature if they rejoice not in Chriſt's grace: they muſt be without natural affection if they be without any ſpiritual conſolation, if ordinarily they be ſo.

Secondly, Believers are wiſe men: and it is *wiſdom* to rejoice in ſuch felicity as victory over death.

In the day of proſperity nature neceſſitates joy, and reaſon enforces it: for happineſs is a feaſt made for mirth; and how monſtrous a folly muſt it be to fruſtrate ſo kind a deſign upon us? wiſdom is a true guſt and right reliſh of things; *Sapit cui res ſapiunt ita ut ſunt:* but how far be they from it who taſte no ſweetneſs in the milk and honey that flow in this victory? Hearts delighting not themſelves in ſubſtances, do moſt certainly delight themſelves in ſhadows: and what a deluſion is that? what a gathering together of all folly, and what a very ſea of it?

The laughter of wretches laden with irons, or ſtanding on the ladder ready for execution, ſeems no greater madneſs than the diſconſolateneſs of them when they are both pardoned and advanced. Should the Saints and Angels in heaven ceaſe rejoicing, it were to be asked, *What wiſdom is in them*; they would be charged with extreme folly. Unreaſonable it would be for them to give over rejoicing, as it would be for Devils and damned ghoſts to begin: and yet it is moſt certain, that juſtified and adopted believers have as true cauſe of joy as angels and glorified ſpirits; are in a ſtate, only in degree, leſs bleſſed; conſequently have as true reaſon to ſing *Hoſannah's* here below, as they to ſing *Hallelujah's* above; and cannot but hold on ſongs of joy in the houſe of their pilgrimage, without firſt becoming ſenſleſs of their conqueſt: joyful *praiſe is comely* for them. Nor is triumph on the way to hell more unreaſonable, than on the way to heaven it is diſcreet. In a word;

To think that ſaints did ordinarily incur and indulge the guilt of its neglect, would be to think them, what the world ſtiles them, *Men beſides themſelves.* This guilt would be a dead fly in their ointment, and make it to ſend forth ſo ſtinking a ſavour of the moſt loathſome folly.

Thirdly, Believers are righteous men; and it is their *juſtice* to be glad, and triumph in their victory over death.

Juſtice withholds not what is due, when it is in the power of its hand to repay: to repay vengeance to evil-doers, and praiſe to them that do well. Death and its complices, the law, ſin, Satan, and hell, are enemies that have tragically uſed believers; made them to bear God knows what, ſhamed them, and tempted them to curſe the day of their birth; held them ſubject to bondage, through fear, all the time that they lay under their power. An holy revenge is now owing to ſin and to Satan; and now that through Chriſt they are taken out of thoſe cruel hands, they are able to pay it; able to expoſe them, and put them to open ſhame; to ſhew abroad how they themſelves have been uſed by one mightier than they; how the law, as damning, is aboliſhed; ſin is condemned; Satan's head is bruiſed; death is plagued; the grave is deſtroyed; and hell hath its mouth ſtopp'd.

On the contrary, there is no finding out to perfection, the breadth and length, the depth and height of God's grace. *The love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord paſſeth all underſtanding:* His grace, and his gift by grace unto believers, are ineffable; infinitely free, without merit in us or any motive. Aſtoniſhingly rich, while we were enemies, moſt defiled and deformed ones; and equally without power to reſiſt damning juſtice, and without the prudence to ask ſaving mercy: angels, our elders and betters, were not pitied, but irreverſably doomed to deſtruction. More than angels and all the creation was worth, was given to redeem us; even as much more than they are worth, as God by Eſſence exceedeth the mere creature. Chriſt is God by eternal Eſſence; and yet God ſpared not his Son, but gave him up to redeem rebels: whereat hell envies, and heaven wonders. A vaſt tribute of praiſe muſt hence riſe due; ſo due, that if believers be ſilent, *the ſtones muſt needs cry out.* Believers, that are no longer mutes, have the dumb Devil expell'd, and their mouths opened for praiſe; their tongues touched with a coal from the holy altar, and qualified to lift up the name of their Redeemer.

But what ſafe triumph in their victory, through him, can render to death the things that are death's, or to Chriſt the things that are Chriſt's? If faith do not now *play on the hole of that aſp, and boldly put his hand on that cockatrice's den*, what ſhame does it thereto? If it doth not *joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of its ſalvation*, what honour doth it pay him? Who makes it to be ſeen, either that death is diſarmed, or that it was Chriſt who did take away its two-edged ſword? That, of worſt loſs is made our gain; or that Chriſt was he who ſo bleſſedly converted it? Wherefore,

Believers

Believers muſt not be thought to put on righteouſneſs, or to deſerve the name of juſt men, but to be moſt unlike to their *righteous Lord, who loveth righteouſneſs*, if they are taken for men void of *David's* reſolution; *I will ſing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will ſing praiſe to my God while I have my being.*

Fourthly, Believers are crowned heads, men of honour, kings and prieſts to God; and it is their *honour* to rejoice and triumph over death.

Fight is not honourable without victory, nor victory without triumph. Believers fight the good fight of faith, and overcome by the blood of the Lamb; but without the joy and triumph of faith they appear but as Sampſon, *when ſhaven, like any other man.* Joy is there ſenſible and viſible principality, the conſpicuous crown of their glory: take away that, and they are kings deprived of their crowns; prieſts unadorned with their holy garments for beauty and for glory, inglorious and unlike themſelves; eye-ſores, and offenſive to them that made them kings and prieſts; and, in the world's eyes, the vileſt abjects; yea, many an one becomes a *Magor-miſſabib*, a terror to himſelf and all about him. The Iſraelites, when their ornaments were off, were *naked, to their ſhame:* believers are ſo when their joy ceaſeth. If there come in among them thoſe that are unlearned or unbelievers, they cannot think God to be in them of a truth, or ſee what they are, or do more than others.

Certain it is, that God doth not willingly grieve them; and the world and Devil cannot take away their joy from them, till they themſelves do caſt it away. Divine grace fails not to adminiſter comfort to them, while they keep in the way of comfort: ſo that their joy never dies but when they kill it; their honour is not laid in the duſt but by their own hands. Wherefore,

How unworthy a judgment muſt we make of believers, if we take them for a generation ſo careleſs of their honour? yea, ſuch murderers of it? for they are no leſs who caſt away the joyful confidence and hope which keeps them from appearing *of all men the moſt miſerable.* The garment of praiſe that can very much diſtinguiſh between God's heirs, and Satan's ſlaves.

Fifthly, Believers are lovers of true pleaſures; and it is their only *pleaſure* to enjoy and triumph in Chriſt Jeſus, and in God through him.

Pleaſure is the life of life, the end of action, and the ſtrength of agents unto it. Carnal men do in all things purſue carnal pleaſures; and ſpiritual men ſpiritual ones. Pleaſure is the ſpring of action in both; and in both, joy is ſtrength, and ſorrow lays amort.

Heavineſs in the heart of a man boweth it down: like a moth in a garment it bites aſunder its ſtrings and its ſtrength; inſomuch that the counſels and determinations of diſconſolate ſouls are faint and tottering, like the motions of wounded bodies. But *merry hearts do good like medicines*; they prevent and remove indiſpoſitions: they are alſo continual feaſts, and preſerve ſpirits: ſalt and ſawce they are, to ſweeten all things in peace; and as drums and trumpets they inſpire courage in war. Wherefore the love of action draws with it the love of joy: and inſeparable are the deſires of holy life and holy mirth; mirth and joy (as the water of *Æſculapius* his well was feigned to be) uncapable of putrefaction.

But what joy is ſo, ſave joy in the ſalvation of the Lord? All others, corporal and intellectual, are vaniſhing in themſelves; and without this are deluſive and corruptive. A nature they have that is clogging, and ſuch as makes variety needful to keep out loathing. Believers do ſee this, and therefore deſpiſe the *cucumbers and melons, which they did eat freely in their dark Egyptian ſtate.* Manna they muſt have now, or they die: a bread and a joy that the world knows not of; one in a higer object, and perfect without defect, perpetual without decay; wherein all deſires may be ſatisfied, and all wants be ſupplied. Now,

What charity, which thinketh no evil, can think believers to be a number of bewitch'd creatures? which they muſt be above any heard of upon this earth, if having a deſire of joy as of life, and having no other joy, or at leaſt none that they can exerciſe without this of their victory by Chriſt, they do not conſtantly rejoice herein. Is it creditable that the *new creature* is one that is averſe from his *ſole pleaſure?* negligent of what is dear to it as its life?

Sixthly, Believers are the lights of the world, and ſalt of the earth: and it is their capital *ſervice* to the church and world to triumph over death.

The work of converting, confirming, and comforting ſouls, is the whole buſineſs of a miniſter; but it is the true buſineſs of every believer. Doing good unto all men is the duty

of all, and the practice of all that be truly good: it is sure that all such do desire and endeavour, in their places, to make others good; and accordingly have the honourable names given them in the word, which speak them to be very useful in the world.

Touching the means of their usefulness, it is known even to a proverb, that precepts do far less avail than examples: and of examples of holy life, it needs not to be said how incomparably most beneficial those are which are most resplendent with divine consolation! how much more than others these do attract and win the tractable, shame and silence the incorrgible, quicken the supine and slothful christian, strengthen the weak and wavering, and solace all! These, it is confessed, do singularly *lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees;* and *keep what is lame from being turned out of the way, and heal it.* But it is to be awfully thought on, what I add.

Unspeakable are the sad effects and consequences of holy mens sad and utterly comfortless walk. *Weak Christians* see it, and call in question the truth of christianity: *scorners* do open wide their mouth: *ignorant* wanderers from the truth are hardened against it: the *lovers of God* are grieved. And till such time as good mens sackcloth is put off, and they become girded with gladness, their light hardly sends forth any convincing or converting beams: their salt emits little piercing and purifying savour.

If therefore the love of God, or the love of men moveth them, believers must watch and pray for the voice of joy and gladness: without which, as their own souls be disquieted, others are dismayed; and the ways of their God are by them exposed to the jealousies of his children, and to the prejudices of his enemies. Their character is blotted, and they must be taken rather for the *defiling pitch* than the *cleansing salt* of the earth.

Lastly, Believers are obedient children of God; and it is their required *obedience* to triumph in their victory through Christ.

It is not only a licence for it that the gospel giveth them, but it is a precept. The old primitive law bound man innocent to enjoy and glory in his blessed life: the Redeemer's law doth not less oblige man renewed, to joy and glory in his more wonderful salvation; in his more blessed life brought out of death.

Who knows not how expresly and repeatedly this precept is proclaimed? *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous! shout for joy all ye that are upright! let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: rejoice in the Lord; and again I say, rejoice: rejoice evermore. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, thou shalt serve thine enemies*, &c. texts are numberless. Under the *law* it self many were the feasts instituted for one fast. In the *gospel-day* the Holy Ghost is sent to be a comforter extraordinary. It were endless to ennumerate the ways in which God expresseth his zeal for his saints joy. The reasons of which zeal are both great and evident. For,

Joy is the commanding affection, the end of all others, that which all do subserve and seek: And if this *ruler* be corrupted, all its *servants* are necessarily wicked. If this potentate be not obedient to God, it draws the whole man into rebellion. He that rejoiceth not in Christ Jesus, feels a thousand temptations to forsake him; yea, in a fearful degree he doth forsake him: for not to delight and rejoice in him is to vilify and dishonour him; and that is to forsake him, with whatever unpleasant services you shall all the while follow him. All is carrion that is not chearfully given: it is not pure sacrifice that is not offered with joy and gladness. In short, thoughts of a Christ not delighted in, will come but seldom, and stay but little in any mind: and an heart not delighted in him, will soon believe a little meditation of him to be enough; and all the duties which are laborious to be an excess. Why are secret ones, and publick, so generally neglected? what maketh backwardness to them? whence rise christians inclinations to foolish forbidden chats and games? whence cometh their quarrelsomness with each other, and with their spiritual fathers and nurses? To these and many like questions it must be answered, *They rejoice not in Christ Jesus.* It needs not be said how impossible it is, without joy in him, to *rejoice in tribulations*, to *take joyfully the spoiling of outward goods*, and to *lay down our lives for him!* sense doth sufficiently certify it.

What shall we then judge of believers, if we take them for men that make no conscience of rejoicing in Christ? we must judge them in the worst sense to be *solifidians*; very *demoniacks* that break all bonds, and cast the strongest cords of God behind their backs; which is as truly impossible as it would be unrighteous for a sound believer ordinarily to do.

Extraordinary is the case of persons obstructed by a melancholy habit of body and temporary temptations: *to will is presently with them, though how to do they find not:* they are not *fugitives*, but *captives*, and *sold under sorrow:* so that it is *a duty they would do, which*

they

they do not do: while remembring death, they are troubled, they complain, and their ſpirit is overwhelmed. Of other chriſtians I ſtick not to ſay, they do not rightly *ſeek the Lord* who *rejoice not*, and are not glad in him through whom they are conquerors of death; who are ſtrangers to the *peace*, the *joy*, and the *glory* of faith, *Rom.* v. 1, 2, 3.

I am next to ſhow, that

§. 2. *Saints do righteouſly triumph aloud over death.*

To ſhout for joy as ſoon as they are in Chriſt, is their reaſonable ſervice: the equity of the command is apparent as the authority of the Law-giver; and the objections againſt it are chaff eaſily blown away.

The ſum of them all is this: heaven only is the ſeat of high joy. On earth 'tis Ἄτοπον, abſurd, and out of place. It is a buſineſs proper for none but ſpirits made perfect; unſpotted with ſin, unclouded with ſorrow, unalarmed with fear: but moſt unfit for ſouls that are bemired with corruption, laden with guilt, clothed with infirmities, ſurrounded with temptations, and *in jeopardy every hour.*

The anſwer is of no difficulty: though the King's preſence makes the fulneſs of joy above, it gives abundance below. The victory given to believers is vocation and adoption, poſſeſſes them of an heaven on earth. *We which have believed do enter into reſt*, Heb. iv. 3. *Ye that believe on the Son of God, may know that ye have eternal life*, 1 Joh. v. 13. This but inchoate victory of believers, makes all *old things paſs away, and all things become new.* The believer's corruption is mortified, guilt's pardoned, infirmities gradually healed, temptations rebuked, perſecutions ſweetned, death diſarmed; and all things are made to ſerve his intereſts: *all things are yours*, 1 Cor. iii. What is there to hurt, after removal of ſin's guilt, and the law's curſe, which is the divine hatred and wrath? what is lacking to his comfort, *whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven and ſin covered?* In ſhort,

There do meet in this inchoate victory of believers, all things requiſite to make an object of joy unſpeakable; and, thereby, to juſtify the moſt lofty triumph. For, what ſhould put a ſoul into exultation, if not,

Firſt, So *great* a bleſſing? one if it muſt be called, it is one and all. And of a greatneſs ſhining forth in the extreme and eternal evil, from which it exempts; and good, wherewith it endows. If the pitch of joy ſhould be proportionable to the good of its object, here can be no exceſs.

Secondly, So *everlaſting* an one? The greateſt things, if like *Jordan*'s ſtreams, they haſten to a ſulphurous lake, are unworthy of delight. It is a ſorry feaſt, on which death it ſelf muſt one day feed. But, duration makes things of value to be invaluable. And nothing is more durable than a believer's victory. His crown is immortal: and heaven ſhall no longer be a kingdom, than he reigns in it with Chriſt. *Peccata non redeunt*; his pardon is irrevocable; the love of God to him is unchangeable; the ſeed of God in him is incorruptible. If then immortality it ſelf doth appretiate; all joy is not too much for him, whoſe object is for all eternity. Κτῆμα ἐς Ἀεί.

Thirdly, So *ſuitable* an one? The more durable goodneſs gives little joy without ſuitableneſs. Pleaſure, is *applicatio convenientis convenienti.* All the mines of *India* would leſs tranſport a famiſhing man, than a morſel of bread. But never was gift ſo ſuited to a creature's need, as believer's victory is. Herein, being in themſelves *dead*, in Chriſt they are made alive. Being *blind*, they receive their ſight. Being *weak*, they are made ſtrong. Being *miſerable*, they are made bleſſed. Being *mutable*, they are eternally eſtabliſhed, *Joh.* vi. 57. *As the Father hath ſent me, and I live by the Father, ſo he that eateth me ſhall live by me.* They muſt, therefore, die for joy, who joy too much for their victory: and ſcarcely could that it ſelf, be called too much.

Fourthly, So *ſumptuous* an one? all the world rates high what is bought dear. But, was there ever ſuch a purchaſe as the Believer's conqueſt? It aſtoniſhed the angels. Our Saviour mentions it, not without wonder, *Joh.* iii. 16. The price, was the very blood of God. And only the mind of God, can comprehend the worth of the blood of God. Wherefore, of the moſt triumphant joy herein, it is boldly to be asked, *Is there not a cauſe?*

Fiftly, So *rare* a bleſſing? rarity doth extremely enhanſe value. Diamonds would be no idols, if they were no rarities. Yea, what would crowns be, if every head wore one? It is what few attain, that all do admire. Now of believers victory, who knows not how little there is of commonneſs, to take away from the comfort? alas! of the *many called* to it, how *few are choſen*, how few *will come to Chriſt for it?* And of the lapſed angels, not ſo much as one recovered his fall. Believers higheſt joy is then ſurely unblamable, if rarity makes good things delectable; and adds ſweetneſs to honey it ſelf.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, So *preſent* an one? It is moſt true, abſent good is the object but of deſire; it muſt be preſent, before it can be embraced with delight. Infidels ask, therefore, of believers, *Are they not mad?* mad to pretend their ſouls filled with the marrow and fatneſs of things far from them. But, they are to be told, believers *are not drunken as they ſuppoſe!* It is in things preſent, that they exult. Preſent, though to the world inviſible. And real, though every where ſpoken againſt, as very chimeras. The glories of their victory are preſent in the *eye* of faith ſeeing them, in the *hand* of faith receiving them, in the *mouth* of faith taſting them. Or, (to ſpeak more to the capacities of infidel objectors) it muſt be ſaid that the bleſſing wherein they rejoice, is in their minds in daily *contemplation*; is in their hearts in conſtant *expectation*, is in their whole-man in ſweet *fruition*. And how are the things in which they themſelves do triumph, any more, or otherways preſent to them? Do natural things incur their natural ſenſes? as truly do ſpiritual ones incur the ſpiritual ſenſes of believers. Whoſe ſpiritual ſight and taſte, do therfore make their exultations as juſt.

No more candles ſhall be lighted in this ſun. I proceed to evince that the ſoul's ſo joyful and thankful, are holy; that,

§. 3 *Believers do triumph holily over death.*

Their laughter is not madneſs. If it be asked of their mirth, what doth it? it muſt be anſwered, it doth on earth, what ſaints and angels mirth doth in heaven. It gives praiſe and thanks to God, and to the Lamb: For,

O death, where is thy ſting? never goes before, but *thanks be to God* follows faſt after. Thankful *repentance*, thankful *faith*, *hope*, and *love*, thankful *new-obedience*.

Blind ſeers are the *Romaniſts*, and others, who teach otherwiſe: And would bear us in hand, that aſſurance of victory over death, is a wine too ſtrong for the head of a viator; any living believer. Such, whoſe mirth would be madneſs; and the joy of it, turn the grace of God into wantonneſs: Diſpoſe us to nothing but ſloth and ſecurity, pride and preſumption. But, what do the arguings of men ſo ſenſual, and void of the ſpirit of faith, avail?

It is true, there are wretches of ſlight and frothy ſpirits, who will be *boaſting of a falſe gift*, a *cloud without water*. Proclaim their wondrous joy, and ſpeak ſwelling words; though their *cloven-feet* do manifeſtly confute their *flaming tongues*. And, not *walking in the fear of the Lord*, it is ſure they do not *walk in the joy of the Holy Ghoſt*. No ſmall ſtumbling block this hath been to men of ſenſes, not exerciſed to diſcern. But theſe following particulars will confute or confound all gain-ſayers.

Firſt, The *efficient* worker of the joy and triumph we ſpeak of, is the Holy Ghoſt. Expreſly it is named his; whoſe operations, no doubt, are holy, and make for holineſs. His comforting work tending as much to ſanctify, as his ſanctifying work tendeth to comfort us. A contrary thought would be blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and plainly make him a miniſter of ſin.

Secondly, The *law* of this joy, is the Holy Goſpel. Believers joy is as ſurely by the goſpel's warrant, as by the ſpirit's work. For, he never *ſpeaketh of his own*; never, as a *judge*, ſpeaks life and joy to any; but thoſe to whom the goſpel, as the law of grace and peace, doth aſſign it. There is a perfect conſent between Chriſt's ſpirit and his word. The joy given by one, is given by both. And, to think that the joy by them given is a ſervant of ſin, were fearfully to blaſpheme both; belying them with a brow of braſs.

Thirdly, The *end* of this joy is holy converſation. Whereby is our heavenly Father glorified but by our bringing forth much good fruit? Or, what doth he either conſtitute in his word, or diſpenſe with his ſpirit, but for the end that he thereby be glorified? If we imagine that this joy of believers, ſo conſtituted and ſo diſpenſed for this end, is no apt means for it, but for the contrary; how fooliſhly muſt we charge him, who is only wiſe?

Fourthly, The means whereby this joy is wrought, are holy ordinances and vigorous exerciſe of grace therein. The holy ſpirit uſeth not to lift ſouls out of the hell of their fears; much leſs to lift them up to the heaven of triumphant joys but in this way. And, is it likely that the effect ſhould be an enemy to its cauſes? That the believers joy, like a viper, ſhould be death to his parents? That communion with God ſhould beget ſuch a delight in him as ſhould make us by and by weary of him.

Fifthly, The ſubjects of this joy are holy ſouls; others are uncapable of it: nor need we ſay what uſe they would make of it, who make the worſt uſe of all the grace (objective and ſubjective) that they do receive. Moſt ſure it is, the holy Spirit firſt *worketh* grace, then *witneſſeth* it to be in a man; and ſo *comforteth* him, and cauſeth him to triumph

umph in his ſtate of grace. Chriſt is formed in the ſoul before the ſoul rejoiceth in Chriſt; and it is then a prepared ſubject for joy; is it not? And who can believe that then, like a dunghil, it will be made the fuller of ſtench and noiſom fumes by the ſhines of heaven on it? and not, like a garden, have its ſpices flow out more abundantly. Bees do ſuck honey out of ſweet flowers, whatever it be that ſpiders do extract.

Sixthly, The very *eſſence* of this joy is holy obedience: And is not obedience the womb of obedience, as ſin is the womb of ſin? What carries to obey God more than obeying doth? Naturally acts do ſtrengthen habits; and inſtitutively alſo. God of admirable love rewards grace with grace. The believer's joy anſwering a known precept, prepares his ear and heart to anſwer all the divine ones. In a word, how fruitful of holineſs is the joy of ſaints in heaven? Believers joy is is the very ſame nature; and why ſhould it not be their holy ſtrength alſo?

Seventhly, The conſtant viſible *concomitants* of this joy are extraordinary holy. Satan's deluſion it is, and not divine conſolation, which ſheweth not, *out of an excelling converſation, its works with meekneſs of wiſdom.* Holy joy hath theſe jewels ſhining in the crown of it. *High eſteem of Chriſt Jeſus.* No ſtar leads to Chriſt more than joy in him doth. *Profound humility*: The moſt joyful Apoſtle ſtiled himſelf leaſt of ſaints, chief of ſinners. Spiritual flame is herein natural; the higher it riſes the more it trembles. *Sorrow for ſin after the moſt godly manner.* No where are ſo bitter herbs eaten, and ſo ſweetly, as in this joyful feaſt of paſſover. *Strickeſt watchfulneſs againſt ſin.* The more joy in a treaſure, the ſtronger guard is ſet upon it againſt the robber: Becauſe joy breeds jealouſies, *omnia tuta timet*, the diſciples for very joy believed not, *Luke* xxiv. 41.) and jealouſy ſuffers not to ſleep or ſlumber. *Thoughtfulneſs of heaven.* The joyful Iſraelite had *Canaan* in his mind all the while he was in the deſart *True contempt of this world's gaudies.* What are candles or ſtars when the ſun appears? When the good of all the land of *Egypt* was before *Jacob* and his ſons, they regarded not their ſtuff, *Exod.* xlv. 20. The joy of paradiſe ſtains the glory of a *Paris*. *Sweet content in the moſt bitter wordly ſtate.* The joy of faith finds meat in the eater, and ſweetneſs in the ſtrong. *The God whom we ſerve is able and he will deliver us*, ſay the hebrew heroes. And what follows? *Upon their bodies the fire had no power; not an hair of their heads is ſinged; they walk in the midſt of the fire, and have no hurt.* Lions dens are quiet rooms to *Daniels*. Priſons are muſick-houſes to ſuch as *Paul* and *Silas*. *Exquiſite pleaſure in all holy ſervices.* Being full of holy joy, St. *Paul* was well pleaſed to be kept out of heaven for a time, to ſerve Chriſt's intereſt on earth. And joyful *Luther* profeſſed, he had rather honour God with his ſervice, than be honoured by God with any gifts which made great and noted in the world: *Mallem obedire quam miracula facere.* Laſtly, *a real indifferency towards this preſent life.* It is only the joyful chriſtian that can poſſeſs this; but the heart of every one that is ſuch doth ſay as his Lord, *father, not my will, but thy will be done.* Concerning his ſtay in the body, it thus ſaith moſt ſincerely.

To conclude, is God to be thought now a loſer and not a gainer in his glory by believers joy? or is it poſſible that holineſs ſhould languiſh in a joy wherein theſe fruits do flouriſh? In a joy that ſo evidently maketh God to be the center of the rejoicing heart? the center toward which it moves, and in which it reſts.

There are many *inferences* of moſt humbling, inſtructing, and comforting truth, which do here offer themſelves; and, I preſume, will be darting in their beams upon minds not ſhut up againſt them: Their light is ſuch as is ready for every prepared eye.

It is therefore a tripartite exhortation, wherewith I conclude;

1. *To thoſe that have not ever ſang triumph over death.*
2. *To thoſe who have ſung it, but have loſt that voice of joy and gladneſs.*
3. *To thoſe who have for any time ſung it, and are ſtill ſinging it.*

I muſt have leave to think that all three ſorts are preſent among us. Unto the firſt, I firſt addreſs my ſelf.

§. 1. *To ſuch of you as have not yet ſung triumph over death.*

If now you believe the truth which hath been irrefragably proved, I exhort as follows:

Firſt, *Acknowledge your ſelves to have no ſaving-faith, if you have no ſtirring deſires to attain a joying faith.* It hath been ſaid by what means a child of God may be kept, it may be all his days from the joy of faith; but it cannot be ſaid, whereby he ſhould be ſo kept

from desiring it and from pursuing it Nothing but a reigning and damning presumption or despair is able to keep a soul from these. Review my seven arguments, which I may not repeat; and assure you, it is no child of light that sits unconcernedly in the dark, as if nothing ailed him; and unto whom it is not as death itself, that he cannot triumph over death; who travels not from ordinance to ordinance, for the power and the act; and follows not heaven with unutterable sighs and groans until he gains them. Comfortless believers are represented so doing; *Cant* iii. 1, 2, 3. and v. 6, 7

Secondly, *When you bestir your selves for the joy of faith, be not impatient if it doth not presently become triumphant.* To be using the means appointed for getting it, is your unquestionable duty; but to fret against God, as though he wronged you if he made you wait long for it, is your certain sin and folly. Doubt not but God will give it as soon as he sees you fit for it: And nothing save ignorance and pride can make that wild question, *why should I wait on the Lord any longer?* In a word, *let him not go till he bless you with it*; but let him take his own time to bless you with his richest gift. It is unbelief that makes haste, and that haste makes woe.

Thirdly, *When you are waiting for the joy of faith, be praising and blessing God for putting you upon the pursuit of it, and enabling of you to wait therein.* This grace well deserveth your best thanks. Had you ever ran after it, if grace had not drawn you? or had not you laid violent hands on your selves, as others have done under their terrors, if grace had not restrained you? *Thanks* are *sacrifices with which God is well pleased.* And who was ever known to be thankful for twilight, but he had e'er long a shining noon-day? On the contrary, from him who is unthankful, sun, moon, and star-light is full often removed, and he is left as without hope.

Fourthly, *When you are blessing God for drawing you to seek the joy of faith, fail not to multiply the two first acts of faith.* That which *prepareth* for union to Christ, and that which *uniteth* unto him. Plainly thus, night and day tell your souls, that God, propitiated by Christ, will surely save them if they truly repent, and believe on him. Proceed also, and perpetually be saying to your God, that, as far as the Holy spirit doth and shall assist, you do, and you ever will commit you to his saving-mercy, and submit you to his ruling authority in Christ. *Multiply direct acts if you would have the comfort of reflex*, say all our Divines. This is the only way wherein a trembling faith may be expected to be made a triumphing one.

Fifthly, *When you act holy faith attend upon God in all holy ordinances.* It is at wisdom's gates that the hearts of the poor and sorrowful are made to sing for joy. Be you constantly found at every one of them; for you know not whether your waiting at this or that shall best prosper: but you may be certain your neglect of any one will provoke God to send you away empty from all the other. Sometimes it is in *reading* and *hearing* that joy is infused: Sometimes it is in *prayer*, that, as *Peter*'s bonds are loosed: Sometimes it is with *sacramental wine* that hearts are cheered: Sometimes it is the *conference* of holy friends that sharpneth a man, as iron sharpneth iron: Many times *singing of psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs*, do together make glad the heart of God and man. Try all, and continue in them, and fear not but you shall have *beauty given you for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning.*

Sixthly, *When you attend on holy ordinances, cast away all your transgressions.* As soon shall heaven'y joy enter hell, as a presumptious sinner's heart. It is only the conqueror that is capable of triumph; the conquerors of all wilful sin: he that being made free from all such, hath now his fruit unto holiness. *We lie*, saith St. *John, if we say we have fellowship with him, and do not the truth.* They, who, like Devils, are ever in the fire, and be never refined; be ever using holy things, but are not made holy by them; they are, as certainly as Devils, held in chains of darkness. Old and new Testament say, *there is no peace to the wicked.* Allow then no sin, if you would attain any peace.

Seventhly, *When you cast away all your sins, be ye doers of all Christ's word.* Negative goodness is a very chimera. Christ loves and manifests himself to them only who *have his commands, and keep them.* Though duties be not the *merits*, they are the *means*, and commonly the measures of peace and joy; and of all duties, those arduous ones that do most cross the grain of corrupt nature, and most thwart our secular interest. Would you have your light to rise in obscurity, and your darkness be made as noon-day? *draw out your soul to the hungry, satisfy the afflicted* Would you be made appear to be children of God and co-heirs of Christ? *love your enemies, bless them that curse you.* Would you have your consciences, and all the world, be made to know that God is not ashamed to be called your God? *Be not ashamed* then *of the gospel of Christ* at any time, but couragiously own and confess him

and

and it, in the midſt of gainſayers. Would you be moſt certain you are not reprobates? *Keep under your bodies, and bring them into ſubjection.* By rare duties you may riſe up to as rare joys.

Eightly, *When you are doers of the word, give not way to ſuch ſcruples as have no bottom on the word.* Unreaſonable fears are the ſins of our hearts as truly as they be thorns in our ſides: they grieve the Holy Spirit; and they together deny and impair, and tend to deſtroy his work in us. Thieves they are that do waſte the candle of the Lord; and worms that eat up the hidden manna.

As many as are liable to theſe diſtempers would do well to take to heart theſe and like antidotes.

God accepteth mites, though his due be ten thouſand talents: elſe what would become of the richeſt in faith and works?

Holineſs is leſs than ſinfulneſs. The field which hath millions of weeds in it is a corn-field for all that: there were none upon this earth elſe.

Damning ſins be ſomewhat more than terrifying falls: yea, we receive the leaſt hurt by the ſins that put us into the greateſt fright. He that exclaims, I am dead, expreſſeth a conceit which he confuteth. *David*'s fall and *Peter*'s, were terrible, but were not mortal. It is keeping under water drowns a man; it is not his falling into it that kills him.

Smoaking flax hath more fire in it than is thought of. No doubt but *Heman* was ſtored with God's graces while he was diſtracted with his terrors.

Travellers be not out of their way as oft as they be out of ſight of the city they would be at: No, but they are as truly moving towards it when they are in the vale, and do but think of it, as when they are on the top of an hill, and do pleaſantly behold it. The way to heaven is through great changes and many viciſſitudes, up hill and down hill: but in the *deep* as truly as on the *mount*, in temptation as truly as out of it, a ſaint makes way toward heaven. The will and work of his God he very profitably ſuffers, when he knows not what he does. And on he goes toward heaven, as ſinners do toward hell, not knowing whither they go.

Trees do grow downward when they have ſcarce ſap enough to ſhow that they be alive upward. Wondrouſly gainful are many ſpiritual loſſes themſelves: good words and works are a chriſtians leaves and fruits. Self-denial and faith in Chriſt are his root. By the winter-ſeaſon, which doth deaden him to thoſe former, he is enlivened and ſtrengthened in theſe latter. And the temptations and temporary deſertions, which take from him his activity, do make him amends by notable additions unto his humility, even all days of his life. Moſt true are judicious *Hooker*'s words; *Happier a great deal is he, whoſe ſoul by inward deſolation is humbled, than he whoſe heart, through abundance of ſpiritual delight, is lifted up above-meaſure.* Remember, troubled ſoul, remember it well, bitterly humbling winters do make ſweet and fruitful ſummers And know thou,

If the corn upon the ground be good, it matters not how little deep the plough went. Do not torment thy ſelf, as the manner of ſome is, with fears that thou art not of the good ground, upon a ſurmiſe that God hath not broken thee up with convictions and humiliations ſufficiently deep. Examine more thy corn, and be leſs concerned about the plough. If thy reliance on Chriſt's righteouſneſs be entire, and thy imitation of his holineſs be conſtant and cordial, the plough hath done its part upon thee. Conſider on the other hand too, that

There are valuable things kept in brine as well as in ſugar. Dream not, that becauſe thy life is made ſorrowful, God intends not ever to advance thee to his fulneſs of joy. The fruits which are preſerved in ſweetneſs that exceed honey, be not more intended for the table of the Lord, than the meats that are buried in ſalt and bitterneſs.

All the fruits of Chriſt's garden be not of a ſize, not equally ratheripe. Conclude not, that thou art none of his plants, becauſe others do vaſtly excel thee in all chriſtian virtues, and out-do the in all the works of righteouſneſs. One roſe upon a buſh, though but a little one, and though not yet blown, proveth that which bears it to be a true roſe-tree. Look well to thy ſincerity, and to thy ſincere labour for proficiency: then know, that neither God or Men do cut down good trees, becauſe ſmall; or deſpiſe unripe flowers and fruits, if they be ripening.

A ſorry ſpeaker may be a moſt excellent wreſtler. *Milo* had not the tongue of *Cicero*. *Moſes*, that great prevailer with God, was a man of a very ſlow utterance. Do not ſay, you cannot *pray* becauſe you cannot *ſpeak* much, or well, or long. Praying is wreſtling with God. The heart is the wreſtler: holy faith is the ſtrength of it. If by means of this ſtrength thy heart be a good wreſtler, though thou art ever ſo tongue-tied, thou wilt be a prevailer. Rhetorick goes for little in the heavenly court; but ſincere groans have a kind of omnipotence.

A mine of gold may be a long time unknown. The heat of the ſun may make it many a year before the light of the ſun doth diſcover it. It is long before the Spirit doth witneſs to ſome, what he works in them.

A king is not the leſs a king for dreaming himſelf a beggar. Suppoſitio nil ponit in eſſe. Victorious believers are moſt truly ſo, when they are not ſenſibly ſo.

The moſt bruiſed reed maketh no little melody to the Lord. Our compaſſionate Saviour tells his affrighted dove, when driven into the clifts of the rock, that her voice was ſweet, *Cant.* ii. 14.

The little ſpecks in the milky way be as real ſtars as the ſun. We muſt not argue that we are darkneſs it ſelf, becauſe we are not the moſt burning and ſhining lights.

The crying child is alive as ſure as the laughing one. If whatever ſtole away our joy, did ſteal away our faith alſo, where would faith be found upon earth? The world and church will be ſoon at an end, when all ſhall kill that maketh to cry.

It doth often rain and ſhine together in the heart of a believer. His ſoul hath the joy that is his duty, and ſhines with grace acted in deſires and endeavours to triumph: when as yet it hath not the joy that is the largeneſs of God's bounty, by which its clouds muſt be chaſed away; no, but is lamenting after the Lord for it: *Dolet, & de dolore gaudet.* Joyfully it laments after him for it, ſinging our renowned *Gataker*'s moſt delectable lamentations.

I thirſt for thirſtineſs, I weep for tears;
Well pleas'd I am to be diſpleaſed thus:
The only thing I fear, is want of fears;
Suſpecting I am not ſuſpicious!
I cannot chuſe but live, becauſe I die;
And when I am not dead, how glad am I?
Yet, when I am thus glad for ſenſe of pain,
And careful am, leſt careleſs I ſhould be;
Then do I grieve for being glad again;
And fear, leſt careleſſneſs take care from me!
Amidſt theſe reſtleſs thoughts, this reſt I find,
For thoſe that reſt not here, there's reſt behind.

And as for ſinful ſorrow it ſelf, be it obſerved, *A believer may glorioufly conquer, even when he is miſerably conquered.* And he doth ſo, when, tho ſin ſtrikes him down, it cannot make him yield. Poſitive nolition is conqueſt of ſin. Of the unconſenting and outcrying virgin, over-powered by the ſtrength of a ruffian, God did pronounce that *there was no ſin in her worthy of death.* By reſiſting ſhe made the deſtroyer flee, even then when ſhe could not make the defiler flee. The believer that reſiſts, is not ſtruck down under the wrath of God, when he is ſtruck down into the mire of ſin. *Glory be to God in the higheſt.* Fight againſt ſin, though it be upon our knees, is conqueſt.

And therefore, laſtly, Rahab *is in heaven as ſure as* Abraham, St. *James* ſaith, that dwarf in faith was juſtified by it as well as this giant. And it's ſure, if juſtified, is glorified. Now,

Whoſo is wiſe and will obſerve theſe things, they ſhall to their joy, underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord.

My exhortation is;

§. 2. *To thoſe that have formerly ſung triumph over death, but have loſt that voice of joy and gladneſs.*

All ſuch, are to be thus exhorted. Firſt; *Deſpiſe not your loſs.* For it's a loſs of more than all the world is worth. It's a loſs of heaven upon earth. A loſs, that was to *David* as a *ſword in his bones:* and cannot but be grievous to a heart that is not perfectly ſenſeleſs. Unto any other, to joy in Chriſt's love is ſweeter than life; and to have that joy taken away, muſt be more bitter than death. Yet,

Secondly; *Deſpair not under this loſs.* You are not the firſt that have fallen under it. *David* loſt his joy, and cried, *O ſpare me. Jeremiah* was afraid to die, *Jer.* xxxvii. 20. *Hezekiah* turned to the wall, and wept at the tidings of death. Holy *Latimer* told his *Ridley*, that ſometimes he could run into an hole for fear. A balm in *Gilead* there was for them, and a phyſician that reſtored them. Nor is there any reaſon, why your wound ſhould be preſumed to be incurable. It is ſurely your duty to pray for the cure. And it were a fond conceit that you might not look for, the things you are bound to pray for.

Thirdly; *Enquire how you came by your loſs.* Whether *pride* were not ſwelling in you; and made needful this loſs, to keep you from being exalted above meaſure. Or, whether *earthly-mindedneſs* got not into you: for, as in nature, it cannot be night till the earth interpoſe between the ſun and us; ſo I queſtion whether ever a very dark night fall on the face of a ſoul, but by ſome earthly things interpoſing between Chriſt and it. The *Achan* that is the

troubler

troubler, muſt be ſtoned e're you are like to be quiet. To which purpoſe, you are to make diligent ſearch after it.

Fourthly; *Blame not God for your loſs.* Juſtifying God, as *David* did; and to yourſelves take all the blame and ſhame. To be ſure, your own ſin was all the *culpable* cauſe. And this know; till a *Job* let's go his hard thoughts of God, and abhors himſelf in duſt and aſhes, his captivity is not to be turned. But then, it is preſently turned, and his comforts be forthwith multiplied.

Fifthly; *Conceal not your loſs.* Hide it not from thoſe to whom God ſaith, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.* Peace and joy are created by God, but they are adminiſtred by his ſervants. Whom, not to conſult in your troubles, is to deſpiſe. And whom to deſpiſe, is to deſpiſe Chriſt and him that ſent him.

Sixthly; *Conſent to God's terms for the repair of your loſs.* With a thouſand thanks, go and enter a-new the covenant of grace. He cannot in honour make the terms thereof any lower. But if you humble you as low as the goſpel demands, you will be ſeaſonably exalted to the glorious joy that it promiſes. Lazy deſires of comfort on other conditions, will ſhame you much, and profit you nothing.

Seventhly; *Ply all the appointed means for recovering your loſs.* Be much in the ordinances wherein you firſt found comfort. Read much the goſpel, which was written *that ſaints joy might be full.* Hear it much, as preached by Chriſt's miniſters; who are given to be *helpful of your joy.* Pray much; our Saviour having ſaid, *Ask and ye ſhall receive, that your joy may be full.* Look much to Chriſt in the ſeals of the covenant alſo, until you are lightned. Of all ordinances, they are the higheſt reſtoratives.

Laſtly; *Reſolve to follow God, though he never in this life repair your loſs.* To follow him, and perſevere in his ſervice mournfully, if you cannot comfortably. Yea, and labour to ſhow all about you, that you are ſo ſenſible of your tranſgreſſions, of his puniſhing you leſs than they deſerve; that your ſoul loves him and bleſſes him for his eſſential goodneſs and his benignity, even whilſt he *giveth you no kid to make merry.*

Thus, *Wait on the Lord, and he ſhall renew your ſtrength: he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaſeth ſtrength.*

A few words remain to be ſpoken,

§. 3. *To thoſe of you that are ſinging, O death, where is thy ſting?* &c.

Firſt; *Forget not your envious enemy.* Satan envies none ſo much as you, who are mounted on the higheſt pinacle of the temple. If he caſts you down, the greatneſs of your fall gives an eminence to his conqueſt. And he will ſpare no pains for his glory in your ſhame.

Secondly; *Remember your undoubted duty, i e.* of doing more than others. Walking more holily, righteouſly, and ſoberly than other ſaints; even ſaints more aged, and more richly gifted. For it is to you, of all ſaints on the earth, that much is given; and from whom much is required. Much more than was required from you, before you were taken up into this third heaven

Thirdly; *Conſider the difficulty of kindling again the fire, that is eaſily quenched.* Your joy is an holy flame; but it is extinguiſhable by one ſin of preſumption. And then where are you? That meaſure of repentance that fitted you for your firſt conſolation, will not fit you for its renovation.

Fourthly; *Bind the goſpel-covenant about your neck: write it on the table of your heart.* It hath been ſaid, he who underſtands this, is a good divine. Sure I am, he that ſhall not keep it as the apple of his eye, it not like to be a joyful chriſtian very long. Let the terms hereof ſlip out of our minds, we are ſtrait-way like the waves of the ſea, at the mercy of the next wind that blows.

Fifthly; *Fear motes as truly as beams, gnats as camels.* Your greateſt danger is of incurring the guilt of ſins, comparatively, leaſt. And fear of falling into them, is a means of keeping free from them Bear it ever in your minds then; though rapes do not violate wedlock, yet a wanton glance, which is a wilful wickedneſs, ſtrikes at the heart of it. And bodkins do ſtab as mortally as broad ſwords.

Sixthly; *Defer not to pay your vows.* Few, I ſuppoſe, do come to the joy of faith without this natural worſhip of vowing to God. But, ſurely, none that perfidiouſly break their vows do long hold their joys. *Jacob*, ſtiled uſually the *Father of vows*, paid dear for his unmindfulneſs of them.

Seventhly; *Be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and make the hearts of your diſconſolate brethren to ſing for joy.* As much as in you lies, this do. For this end, among others, are you comforted, that you might comfort others by the comfort wherewith you are comforted of

God. If you neglect this duty, no wonder if your ſun be turned into darkneſs, and your joy into mourning. No wonder if God withdraw from you, and ſin and Satan getting advantage againſt you, do again plunge you into the pit where there is no water. *He that witholdeth corn, the people ſhall curſe him:* he that witholdeth ſpiritual bread from the poor and needy, his God will chaſtiſe him. But, *the liberal ſoul ſhall be made (and kept) fat; he that watereth, ſhall be watered alſo himſelf. His heart ſhall rejoice, and his joy no man ſhall take from him.* To conclude;

Would you not loſe the ſenſe of God's love? would you not bear a-new his hot diſpleaſure? would you not be loaded with oppreſſing apprehenſions of his temporal judgements? would you not be ſcorched with fears of being eternally rejected by him? would you not be perfectly diſpirited unto duty, and be made to cry as *David, I am not able to look up? Theſe things*, then *do, and the God of peace ſhall be with you. God your Maker, ſhall give you ſongs in every night.* Your Redeemer ſhall be a *Prince of Peace*, as well as of *Righteouſneſs* to you. The Holy Ghoſt your Sanctifier, ſhall make you to know him and his glorious Attribute, *the Comforter.* Wherefore, *be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; for as much as ye know your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Some MEMOIRS *of the Author's* LIFE.

Piety and *Charity* do require, that ſomewhat be now ſaid of the rare ſervant of Chriſt, whoſe deceaſe hath occaſioned this diſcourſe. Mr. *ROBERT FLEMING*; a name moſt worthy of precious and everlaſting memory. A ſaint, in whoſe life and death the whole triumph of my text hath been admirably exemplified.

Piety, I ſay, requires it; for ſaints characters, are God's praiſes more than theirs. And *Charity* requires it; for the *example* of their graces and comforts, more edifieth the church than *doctrinal arguments and motives.* Very *ſacrilege* therefore it would be, a *robbery of God and his Church*, to be ſilent of this ſaint; this *one of a thouſand.* To cover his unexpreſſible *grace*, as painters uſed to do *Agamemnon's grief*, with a vail; and to ſay *nothing*, becauſe the *one half* cannot be told, would be but a proud humility.

Panegyrick and *Encomium*, indeed, here needs not be any. The *Jews* ſay true in this; *Juſt men do find ſufficient ſtones for their monuments.* All that is needed or intended, is plain narrative what our *FLEMING* was, and what he did. What he was, through the Grace of God; and what he did, or rather, what *the grace of God did in him.*

A copious ſubject this is; and leſt the multitude of things memorable overwhelm us, in this order they are preſented.

His *Country*, was *Scotland.* Honoured by God, the Fountain of Honour. Honourable with ſaints, the next-beſt judges of honour. And the more honourable for the birth of this renowned ſaint therein. Which was *An.* 1630, at *Bathens*, alias *Eaſter*; the ſeat of the Earl of *Tweddale*; where his reverend father Mr. *James Fleming*, was long a miniſter of the goſpel. Serpent's hiſſings are deſpiſed; if any thing leſs earthly ſtirs its tongue againſt the Church of *Scotland*, as ſufficient to their ſhame, it is here told what is well known. The moſt *learned Prince* that ever ſwayed the ſcepter of theſe kingdoms, affirming it to be the *pureſt of all the Reformed churches.*

Of his *Parentage*, ſuffice it to be ſaid, *He was the ſeed of Gods friends.* His family was honourable in his relations, and moſt eminent for religion.

His *Education*, was firſt in the college of *Edinburgh*: wherein he ran through the courſe of *Philoſophy* with great applauſe. And made laudable progreſs in the *learned Languages.* Then, tranſlated to the Univerſity of St. *Andrew's*; he travelled through *Theology* under the conduct of the learned and holy Mr. *Rutherford.*

His *Natural Parts* were excellent: his *Underſtanding* quick and penetrative. His *judgment* clear and profound. His *fancy* rich and fluent. His *memory* ſtrong. His *expreſſion* maſculine, and of a grace that did take with thoſe who were not unacquainted with his *idiotiſms and accents.* By which it was indeed clouded to us of *England.*

His *Acquired Learning* was great. Anſwerable to his happy parts, and their culture. Through the divine bleſſing on his pious diligence, it was rathe-ripe. *Hiſtory*, the eye of learning, he ſingularly affected. Eſpecially, *Sacred Hiſtory*, the right eye. But unto him all hiſtory was ſacred; for he conſidered God's actions more than man's in all of it. Nor valu'd he man's, but for the knowledge of God's. With whoſe holy counſels and ways he was ſo well acquainted, that, before he was 23 years old, he was call'd to a paſtoral charge. And was ſettled therein at *Campuſlang*, in the ſhire of *Cliddſdale.* Where he ſerved his

his God till the year 1661. In which the ſtorm roſe that drave out thouſands, *whereof the age was not worthy.* He had taken in marriage *Chriſtiana Hamilton*, juſtly famed for her perſon, gifts, and graces, which were all eximious. By her he had ſeven children; and with them and himſelf ſweetly committed unto his God's proviſion, *he humbly received the honour of his ejection.* Of the children, the Lord received to himſelf three of them before their mother, and two of them ſince. Bleſſed be his name, two do ſtill ſurvive!

As for *Worldly Subſtance*, his ſhare ſeems according to *Agur*'s deſire. He hath told me, that, as *Luther*, he never, to his knowledge, deſired much of it, or was very careful about it. During the moſt tragical days, his *table was ſpread, and cup filled, and head anointed with freſh oil.* Liberally his children were educated; and in good works he was profuſely rich. Of his own laying up, I have good warrant to ſay, *he had no treaſure but in heaven.* His own teſtimony of his life was this; *It was once made up of ſeeming contrarieties: great outward trouble, and great inward comfort. And I never found* (ſaid he) *more comfort, than when I was under moſt affliction.*

Touching his *Name* and *Note* in the world, this only ſhall be ſaid; Againſt all his projects and pains to reſtrain it, his fame had flown thro the chriſtian world. His *conferences, ſermons*, and *writings*, made it too big and too bright to be covered. A name more ſweet and precious, and more generally ſo, to chriſtians of all minds and guſts, I hear not of, nor read I any one!

To the praiſe of our *Engliſh Court*, I write it; the *Sun* and *Moon*, as well as other *rare ſtars* thereof, admired *holy Fleming*, and ſhone propitiouſly on him. May the everlaſting love of his God, be the reward of their love unto his faithful ſervant.

But I am yet in the *lower hemiſphere.* More high and honourable things remain to be ſaid of this man of God!

His *Converſion* to his God was early and illuſtrious. It was but a little while that he had dwelt in this world, before *God dwelt in him, and he in God.* And that, ſo evidently, by the exilience of all chriſtian virtues, that little more doubt was made of his being *born of God*, than of his being *born of a woman.*

His *Walk* with God was admirable: and to many of this age will ſeem incredible. It is certain, not one *Enoch* of many doth walk ſo exactly. So univerſally in all holy ways; and ſo humbly, with ſelf-denial to extremity. It was extraordinarily that his ſpirit was compoſed for adoration; and accordingly his life was a life of worſhip extraordinary. His *ſolemn dedications* of himſelf to his God were frequent. His *Soliloquies* with him, almoſt perpetual. He was *ever with him!* And his always-ſerene *countenance* ſpake it enlightned always by the divine One. His always-gracious *ſpeech* ſhewed from what altar the coal touch his tongue. Not without cauſe it hath been a fear, that, ſhould his *diary* come abroad, moſt readers would be *too weak veſſels for his ſtrong wine.*

His *Activity* for God in his miniſtry, was ſuch as was to be expected from a Mr *Fleming.* From a large ſoul, comprehenſive of the intereſts of God and his Church and the world, the preſent age and future. And from a ſoul moſt enflamed with love; and thereby conſtrained to ſpend it ſelf, and be ſpent, for no petty *Faction* or *party*, but for *certain and Catholick chriſtianity.* What a *writer* he was, needeth not here to be written. In *preaching* he was *Boanerges*, and *Barnabas* alſo. Nor knew any man better, how to uſe law and goſpel; without either oppoſing or confounding them. For *converſe*, and for all things uſeful, what might *Campuſlang* teſtify of him? what might *Edinburgh*, and adjacent places, wherein, after his ejection, he lived and laboured? What might *Rotterdam* ſay, where, from the year 1678 to this preſent year, he burned and ſhined? The ſun, I think, ſtood ſtill all the time wherein he had no deſign for God going on. It is well known, the ſun of his life did ſet upon an excellent deſign. Which was of ſending forth a *Treatiſe concerning the way of the Holy Ghoſt's working on the ſouls of men; eſpecially, after converſion, in communion between God and them.*

His *Succeſs* from God given in his work, was not ordinary. He had a numerous ſpiritual progeny. And they are very many who have thankfully commemorated in my hearing, their benefit from his writings. The Holy Spirit that bloweth in whoſe books he liſteth, hath ſingularly honoured his. And, I well know, doth ſtill continue to honour them. Of both his ſurviving *ſons*, it muſt be ſaid, though it be here a very high word, they do *Patrizare:* and do make it manifeſt that the holy ſaint's prayers were heard, and his pains richly proſpered unto them.

His *Peacefulneſs* in God's Houſe is by no means to be omitted. Controverſies he declined, not becauſe of *inſufficiency*, but of *diſlike.* Seeing better than others do, or will ſee, that many errors will be ſooner ſtruck to death by a *juſt contempt*, than by a *full confutation.* And will be leſs apt to revive, after they have been *generouſly diſdained*, than after that they

they have been *operously exploded.* Well he knew, and oft he would say, what a servant the *bond of love* is to the *unity and purity of faith.*

Speaking of the differences of brethren in this city, he thus expressed himself; *I am amazed to see good men thus tear one another in the dark. Nor can I understand how they should have grace in due exercise who value their particular designs above the interest of the Catholick Church: and who confine religion to their own notions and models.*

To another complaining of reproaches from pretended friends, his answer was; *To me to be judged of man and of man's judgment is a small thing. I bless God I value not my own name, but God's only. I do confess, when men wound the credit of the gospel through me, it is hard then to bear up.*

Nor may it be forgotten what he hath said to his dear and excellent friend, and spiritual son of this city, (Dr. *D.H.*) *I bless God in fifteen years time I have not ever given any man's credit a thrust behind his back: but when I had ground to speak well of any man, I did so with faithfulness; and when I wanted a subject that way, I kept silence.* O in what concord might *Prelatists* and *Dissenters* walk, much more the *Dissenters themselves*, had they more of this balsamick spirit? What? agree in *principles of faith*, in all *substantial parts of worship*, and assert, all of us, the same *necessity of holiness*, and yet bite and devour one another? Blessed Saviour! send down thy spirit to us with the *wisdom that is pure and peaceable.* But to return: of the man so pure and peaceable it must be added;

His *Triumphs* in the favour of God were transcendent; triumphs over *law, sin, death, grave*, and *hell:* too few do I discern to *aspire* to such as he had long *attained.* O how dwelt he on the *mount*? How oft was he in the *third heaven*? what a *Jacob*, what an *Israel*, was holy *Fleming*? Such a *wrestler* and *prevailer with God*; such a *Moses*, to whom God spake as it were face to face; such a *Nazarite*, with a soul, with a life, and with a name, darkned with no cloud; except but that, of his own humility, which doth together darken a man to himself, and beautify him in the eyes of God and saints. A man so highly favoured of God, and blessed with so much of heaven upon this earth, is not oft found, I suppose, in any one age. There is no end of instances, every day seeming to have been an *holy sabbath* and *communion-day*, and *day of spiritual jubilee* unto him. In his last sickness he had more than one wondrous manifestation of God's love to his soul: and one which he declared he had not strength enough to have been born much longer. But now,

Of his DEATH in the Lord what shall my trembling heart utter? It was but *July* the 17th that his sickness seized him; and the 25th, *he who had so much seen the salvation of our God, departed in peace.* On his first arrest, *O friends*, said he to such as were about him, *Sickness and death are serious things.* But till the sparks of his fever had risen to a flame, he was not aware that that sickness was to be unto death; for he told a relation of his, that if it should so be, it was strange, being the Lord did not use to hide from him the things that he did with him and his

His heavenly Father knew his thorough preparedness for glory, and pleased not to give the premonition which he saw him not to want. *Sudden death is sudden glory* to such saints. Yet before his expiration he was apprehensive of its approach. Calling to him a friend, he asked, *What freedom do you find in prayer for me? Seems God to beckon to your petitions? or does he bind you up, and leave dark impressions on your mind? this way*, said he, *I have often known the mind of the Lord.* His friend telling him he was under darkness, in the case, he said, *Well, I know your mind: trouble not your self for me. I think I may say, that I have been long above the fear of death.*

His groans and struglings argued his flesh to be under no small pains: but his answers to enquiring friends certified that the irons did not enter his soul. Always he would say, *I am very well*; or, *I was never better*; or, *I feel no sickness.* Thus would he say, while he was seen to be very sensible of every thing beside pain.

The malignant distemper wasting his natural spirits, he could speak but little. But what he spake, was all of it like himself. Having felt himself indisposed for his wonted meditation and prayer, he thus said to some near him; *I have not been able in a manner to form one serious thought since I was sick: or, to apply my self unto God, he has applied himself unto me. And one of his manifestations was such as I could have born no more.*

Opening his eyes after a long sleep, one of his sons asked him how he did? he replied, *Never better:* do you know me? said the son; unto which, with a sweet smile, he answered, *Yes, yes, dear son, I know you!* This was about two hours before his ascension. About an hour after it, he cried earnestly, *Help, help, for the Lord's sake!* and then breathing weaker and weaker, he soon gave up his precious ghost. *The renowned eagle took flight to the mountain of spices.*

As his life, his death alſo ſpeaketh. And *whoſoever hath ears to hear, let him hear what the ſpirit ſpeaketh by both of them, unto the churches.*

His *diary*, the rich treaſure of his experiences, is not at hand: And therefore cannot, as yet, be brought into publick light. But from the few *manuſcripts* which are here found, I ſhall add ſome hints that I judge to be very *directive* and *incentive*. I mean the faith of reliance and of aſſurance, in which he was ſo eminent; unto the *love of God and men*, wherein he was ſo vigorous; unto *meditation* and *prayer*, and *heavenly mindedneſs*, wherein he was ſo grand an exemplar.

They are indeed but hints: And, if any difference be, they are the *moſt ordinary* of his memorials. The more *ſublime* and extraordinary ones are kept back, of a ſuſpicion that the generality of good and honeſt readers might be more *amuſed* and *edified* by things ſo ſtupendious. And ſo very much out of the common road of chriſtian experience. But to proceed:

Aug. 16. 1685. Thus he wrote; *I found ſome ſweet acceſs to the Lord in the morning, and in the lively actings of grace; and after I had this day ſet down ſome remarks of the day before, I had ſome clear impreſs of this.* ‘ *Since thou art careful to improve thy talent of obſervation, more ſhall be given, and the oil ſhall not fail, whilſt there are veſſels to receive.*

And now, O the ſweet evening of this ſame day, when in the outer-walk, (where I had found a ſore damp for ſome time) the door was as it were caſt open, with ſuch a clear imparting of theſe great confirmations, that I hope with aſſured confidence, was the voice of my beloved God and Maſter; yea, as indeed it had been, with an audible voice ſaid: ‘ *I will* ‘ *do for thee even exceeding abundantly,* &c. *I will ſurely give thee a deliverance, that ſhall* ‘ *make thee glad above all thy ſorroows paſt. I do remember thy prayers and groans oft in* ‘ *this walk*’; *and though I was only a witneſs of them then, yet now as I have ſeen in ſe*‘ *cret, ſo will I reward thee openly. The time is now come, and it ſhall linger no more;* ‘ *rejoice and be glad, O my priſoner of hope, for the time of thy releaſe is come! I remember* ‘ *thy kindneſs, and know thy love; be ſtill and know that I am God. I know thy diſtreſs,* ‘ *and that thy ſtraits now draw near: but fear not, I will take care of thee: and the* ‘ *greater thy extremity be, the greater teſtimony thou giveſt to me,* &c.

This Thurſday evening, the 17th *of* Aug. *when I came in, with ſome challenges, I got firſt great acceſs to my dear God in confeſſion, and the ſenſe of his peace; which was ſo lively and ſweet, as is unexpreſſible. After, I found ſome ſweet renewing of former confirmations, with Powers impreſſed on me, thus;* ‘ 1. *As your latter works have exceeded your former, ſo* ‘ *ſhall your latter days alſo.* 2. *As you have not made haſte, until my time; ſo this is the* ‘ *time I have watched for; when you are now ſo low, to make my power known.* 3. *And do* ‘ *you fear to truſt me? Are the conſolations of God ſmall, or have they ever failed you?* ‘ 4. *You know not, my Child, what I am to do for you, and how near it is,* &c.

After I went down this laſt night, what confirmation had I from God further? And now this morning, Aug. 18. *I had ſome exerciſe of the nature as before,* &c.

And now this ſaturday, Aug. 19. *how clear an evidence did God himſelf give me of the evidence of the work of grace in my ſoul, in ſome moſt lively actings thereof, ſo as to rejoice in him as my alone portion, ſo as to ſay, he only is my ſalvation and my defence, my all, in whom I deſire to triumph and boaſt? And therewith what a ſweet inbreaking followed from himſelf, when he ſaid thus to my Soul:* ‘ *I will deliver you, in a way you know not;* ‘ *and when all means fail, then is the time I chuſe. I know thou haſt none to look to but me.* ‘ *It is not yours to ſee now. But bleſſed are they that believe; for there ſhall be a performance* ‘ *of things promiſed. Doſt thou ſee the pledges I have given thee; and the conveyance of them* ‘ *with ſuch ſealings and embracements of my love? remember the text, that hope makes not a*‘ *ſhamed, becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in thy heart. Thou haſt been long trading* ‘ *wth the talent of the croſs, for ſome fruit unto me. But now I will alſo give thee a talent* ‘ *of comfort, and put it in truſt under thy hand,* &c.

And O how remarkable hath this evening been, and cloſe of this week, which I may call a moſt ſolemn confirming week! And now in its cloſe had I moſt near and ſweet acceſs to my dear God in prayer. And I hope I may own theſe immediate confirmations from himſelf. As, ‘ 1. *What ſhall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour, to whom* ‘ *my honour and ſervice hath been dear?* 2. *Have I ſaid I will never leave thee nor for*‘ *ſake thee; and can I leave thee now, when thou haſt moſt need of me, and when all refuge* ‘ *faileth?* 3. *I know thou art at the hardeſt part of that leſſon, to believe in hope againſt* ‘ *hope: but fear not, I am with thee, (which in an extraordinary way was then ſpoken) and* ‘ *though thou ſee not what thy Outgate ſhall be, leave that to me.* 4. *And what a marvelous and ſweet confirmation did the Lord give to his poor ſervant, as I came down?* Return unto thy reſt, and be ſtill! *Which did ſo deeply ſurpriſe and aſtoniſh, as anſwer-*

ing so directly to what that day had been my exercise; what he would do with my hope, which seemed to be against hope: This was the giving me a new text to answer what I had long been upon, &c.

He spent his days and years after this manner. And in order to have the year rightly carried on, it was (we find) his custom from the *15th* or *16th* year of his age, to his last, to set a-part the first day of every year, in renewing his covenant with God, in a new self-surrender and dedication of himself to him; or, if interrupted the first day, then to take the first convenient day following. We cannot give any account of *the manner of his doing this*, for the first years of his life; but we may guess what they have been, by the few instances following.

1691. *It is the entry of this new year, (as I have done now for many years past most solemnly) that I desire to renew again my personal engaging of my self to the Lord my God, and for him; and with my whole heart and desire to enter my self into his service, and take on his blessed yoke, and humbly to lay claim, embrace and take him, (O him!) to be my God alone, my all, my light and my salvation, my shield and exceeding great reward. Whom have I in heaven but thee, O Lord, or in the earth whom do I desire besides thee?*

And now, under thy blessed hand, my soul desires, and does here testify my trusting my self, and securing my whole interest, my credit, my conduct, my comfort, my assistance, my thorow-bearing, and my poor children; and to leave my self herein, on the gracious hand of my dearest Lord, whilst I am within time. As I write this the 2d day of Jan. 1691.

R. Fleming.

1692. *It is in the entry and first day of this new year, that I desire here as formerly, to enter (in this hidden record) a new surrender and offering of my self to my dear Lord and Master, who hath been wonderfully tender and gracious to me; and hath brought me by his immediate conduct through the days and years of my pilgrimage past; hath still cared for his poor servant, and given more singular mercies and evidences of respect than to many else; and now (as still formerly) hath taken me through this last year with singular evidences of his presence and assistance. And as I trusted my self to my Lord, so hath he graciously answered: for which, and his special grace hitherto, I desire to insert this witness of my soul's blessing the Lord my God.*

And now I do here, with my full and joyful consent, testify my giving up my self again to the Lord, and to his work and service here, and where-ever he shall call me, with desire to consecrate my old age to my God, and the guide of my youth. I love my master and his service; and let my ears be nailed to the posts of his door, as one that would not go free from that blessed yoke and service; and lays, in hope, the whole assistance hereof on his grace and help. And how, in so extraordinary a case, as is alone to my Lord, I desire to witness and renew the same here, with my humble and intire reliance on him, who is my trust from my youth to this day, my shield and exceeding great reward. To him I commit my self, my ways, my work and service, which with my soul's desire, I offer to my Lord: In whose hand I desire to secure my credit for the gospel's sake, my comfort and enlargement in this day of deep trouble and anguish: together with my poor children, and the whole interest of my family and concerns; desiring to put my self, with humble confidence, and all that is dear to me, under his care and conduct. O my soul bless thou the Lord! This I write the 1st of Jan. 1692.

My Lord and my God, R. Fleming.

1694. *It is in the first day, and monday of this new year* 1694. *that as I have formerly through most of my life past, so now do desire to renew my dedication and engagements to the Lord my God, and to join in the same witness with what herein hath been formerly, with my whole heart and desire; and to offer unto my dearest Lord praise, in remembrance of what he hath been through the year past, and in the whole of my life; whose gracious tender conduct hath been so wonderful (and well hast thou my Lord dealt with thy Servant according to thy word) in all hath befallen me. And, as my soul does now move, and betake my self alone to him, as my own God, my Father, my Redeemer and blessed Comforter, and my only all; so do I hereby witness the settling of my trust, my hope, and reliances alone upon him, for this new year, or what time of my life may yet remain, with earnest desire to enter yet again, and continue in his service, even in that delightful service of my dearest Lord and master.*

And now I do again, by a new surrender, witness my entire commitment of my self, my poor children, my credit for the gospel, my conduct and comfort, in so extraordinary a juncture, to my dearest Lord, to his gracious and compassionate care and providence; together with my works, and any small design to serve him and my generation. And I do intreat new supplies of his grace and strength, to secure and make this poor servant (if it were his blessed will) yet more abundantly forth coming to him. And with hope and acceptance, I write this, Jan. 1. 1694.

Post tenebras spero Lucem. R. Fleming.

At

At another time, thus floweth his sacred pen: *O my soul, never forget this solemn wednesday night, nor the last monday night; what solemn visits I had from my Lord, after so serious a work of trial about the warrant of my hope, and petition for the heightning of my faith, and sealing testimony of his spirit: In how marvelus a way did my deareſt Lord, I hope, bear evidence to the great assurance he had formerly given me!* &c.

O let my soul bless and adore the Lord for this sweet and marvelous visit this monday night, which my deareſt Lord, I hope, hath given this poor servant, when so near sinking; and I hope said to my soul: 'Fear not, I forget you not, for I have graven you on the palms of my 'hands, &c. *I look on thee with delight, and the time is come when I will give thee an account 'of thy prayers and tears, of thy many groans and long on-waiting. Have I spoken, and 'will I not do it?* &c. *O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests,* — *in an acceptable time have 'I heard thee! trust thou in the Lord, for I will make thee a sign to this generation,* &c. *'I am leading thee right, and thy strength is to sit still. Is the Lord's hand shortned, that it 'cannot save?* &c.

O how shall I entertain this marvelous day, and appearance of my deareſt Lord to his poor servant! O wonderful condescension this morning, after so sweet an evening before, that he should please to give so near an approach of himself! O, I hope, it was his voice? 'I am come, I am 'surely come, my servant, in the fourth watch of the night, to bring forth my prisoner and set 'him at liberty, who hath stay'd so long for me, &c. — *I embrace you as an over-comer; 'rejoice, for great is your reward in heaven. I am now entring thee on a day of rejoycing: Be 'not doubtful, it is I who comfort thee,* &c. *And when I said, O how shall I manage such a 'wonderful enlargement? how discernibly was it returned, I hope from himself! I will manage 'it for thee: Thou hast stayed for me; but thou hast got the victory, and the day shall be 'thine, and thou shalt know what I have been doing with thee and for thee.*

'O let me never forget the 25*th* of *Decemb.* at night; when after 60 years under 'the Lord's special conduct, he gave me so sweet and remarkable a visit, never to 'be forgotten! O what a night was it, when I went home, prest to sing the 'ciii Psalm!

But it were endless to name passages of this nature; since almost every Day was a communion-day between God and him. And how remarkably God hath answered his prayers, may easily be inferred from hence. One instance to this purpose we may see in his *epistolary discourse*, Page 68. of *a minister*, who had a violent collick immediately taken off, upon his praying to God for that end. It is known to be *himself* he speaks of there; though he expresses it modestly, in the third person.

I shall now present a few things, which he sets down in writing by themselves, under this title *a short index of some of the great appearances of the Lord, in the dispensations of his providence to his poor servant*, &c. And, although the brevity and obscurity of the hints, must needs leave us in the dark as to the full meaning of most of them, (as being written only for his own memory, as the title shews;) yet they will serve to shew us, the particular care of his great Master, over this his faithful and eminent servant. They are the remarks, which he calls the appearances of the Lord towards him; in his own words.

1. *How near was I brought to death in my infancy, given over, yea and esteemed a burden to my friends, so as my death was made desirable to them, I being the refuse of my father's children: yet even then I was God's choice, and in a most singular way restored.* 2. *That remarkable deliverance and receiving a blow by a club, when a child, which was so near my eye, as endangered both my sight and life.* 3. *That strange and extraordinary impression I had of an audible voice, in the church, at night; when, being a child, I had got up to the pulpit; calling to me, to make haste,* &c. 4. *That I, of all my father's sons, being four, should be spared, when the other three were so promising and desirable above me; and should thus come to be the only male-heir surviving of such a stock.* 5. *That solemn and memorable day of the communion at* Gray-Friers, *in the entry of the year* 1648. *where I had so extraordinary a sense of the Lord's presence; yea, whence I can date the first sealing evidence of my conversion, now* 40 *years past.* 6. *The Lord's gracious and signal preservation and deliverance given me at* Dunbar-*fight.* 7. *Those solemn times and near approaches of the Lord to my soul: the first at the* Elve, *when I went there; and the other a little after my Father's death in the high-study.* 8. *That scripture* Acts xii. *was by an observable providence given to be my first text; and how I was unexpectedly, and by a surprizal, engaged therein.* 9. *Those two great deliverances at sea, in going to* Dundee: *the first time in company with the Duke of* Lauderdale; *the other time in company with Mr.* Andrew Gray *of* Glasgow. 10. *That extraordinary dream, and marvelus vision I had twice repeated, with the unexpressible joy after the same.*

11. *Those*

11. *Thoſe memorable impreſſions and preſages about my health, when it ſeemed hopeleſs, at my firſt entry upon the miniſtry; and the ſtrange expreſſion of Mr.* Simpſon *to that purpoſe at* New-Mills. 12. *The Lord's immediate and wonderful appearance for me, in my firſt entry upon the miniſtry; with that extraordinary ſtorm on the day of my ordination; and the amazing aſſault which followed the ſame, in what befel; —— wherein Satan's immediate appearance againſt me was ſo viſible.* 13. *The great and conſpicuous ſeal given to my miniſtry from the Lord, in the converſion of ſeveral perſons; with that marvelous power which then accompanied the word on the hearts of the people.* 14. *That ſignal appearance of the Lord, and his marvelous condeſcendence, in my marriage-lot, and in the whole conduct of the ſame.* 15. *My deliverance from ſo eminent hazard of my life, in my fall from my horſe at* Kilmarnock. 16. *The Lord's marvelous aſſiſtance and countenance at the two communions of* Gathcart *and* Dunlop; *with that great enlargement I had at the laſt of theſe places, at the laſt table.* 17. *That as my entry to my charge was with ſo bright a ſun-ſhine, ſo no leſs did the Lord appear at my parting from that place; wherein all things did meet, in a remarkable juncture, to make the ſame both honourable and comforting.* 18. *The Lord's ſpecial providence, as to my outward lot, after my removal thence, in many inſtances that way.* 19. *His gracious ſparing my dear wife ſo long, when her life was in ſuch hazard in the years 65 and 72.* 20. *The preſervation I had in going over to* Fife, *in the year 72, with the ſolemn times I got there.* 21. *That dream at* Bonſſy; *wherein I got ſuch expreſs warning as to my wife's removal; with the Lord's marvelous appearance and preſence with me the thurſday after St.* Johnſtoun. 22. *That extraordinary warning I got again of my dear wife's death, and of the manner of it, at* London, *in the year* 1674. 23. *Thoſe two remarkable ſcripture-places given me at* Weſtniſbet, *in my return from* London, 1674; *viz. that in* Rom. iv. *in the forenoon, and that in* 115 *pſalm in the afternoon.* 24. *Thoſe great and ſignal confirmations given me, at my wifes death: and that extraordinary voice ſo diſtinct and clear, which I had a few nights after her death.* 25. *Thoſe ſpecial confirmations given me, at my firſt leaving my country, at* Weſtnisbet, Ridſdale, Stanton, *and the firſt at ſea from the* Sheils. 26. *Thoſe ſolemn paſſages to confirm my faith, from* Heb. xi. *and* Exod. xxxiii. *and at other times at* London; *and the laſt night there, before I went away.* 27. *Thoſe extraordinary and ſignal times I had, at my firſt entering at* Roterdam. 28. *Thoſe two obſervable provinces which did occur to me at* Woerden, *and about the buſineſs of* William Mader. 29. *The marvelous ſign given me of the ſtate of my family, in what happened as to ſudden withering of the tree, and its extraordinary reviving again, at my firſt entring into my firſt houſe in* Roterdam. 30. *The great deliverance from fire in the* High-ſtreet. 31. *The ſpecial providence in preſerving my ſon from periſhing in the water.* 32. *The good providence in returning my diary, after it had been long loſt.* 33. *The ſurpriſing relief, when cited by the council of* Scotland *to appear; with that ſweet reſignation to the Lord, which I had then under ſo pungent a trial.* 34. *The remarkable event of a warning I was forced to give, that ſome preſent ſhould be called away by death before the next Lord's-day.* 35. *The Lord's immediate ſupporting under a long ſeries of pungent trials in this place, by a ſeries of wonders (I may truly ſay;) for which I am obliged in a ſingular way to ſet up my* Ebenezer, *that hitherto hath the Lord helped.* 36. *The remarkable appearance of the Lord with me (which I omitted in its place) in that ſtrange province relating to Mr.* Moneyenny's *death at* Preſton-pans. 37. *That moſt ſolemn providence and wonder of my life, my fall under the* York-coach *in* Aug. 1674. *when the great wheel went over my leg, ſo as I could feel it preſſing me, without hurting, far leſs breaking my leg; as if it had been carried thus over in a juſt poize, to let me ſee how providence watched over me,* &c. 38. *The comfort God gave me in my children, and thoſe extraordinary confirmations I got from God, upon the death of thoſe ſweet children whom God removed from me to himſelf.* Now, *go* reader, *go and do thou likewiſe:* for *bleſſed is that ſervant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing;* Mat. xxiv. 26.

An acroſtical memorial *to the memory of the reverend and worthy Mr.* Robert Fleming, *who deceaſed* July 25, 1694. *By a Friend.*

M y pen muſt be like to an angel's quill,
A nd my weak parts muſt equalize my will;
S hould I preſume him fully to ſet forth,
(*T* hough in rude characters) or draw his worth.
E xtol him as you pleaſe, yet ſtil you ſhall
R emaining find behind, *This is not all.*

R enowned men and righteous are this day,
(O ſad prognoſtick!) quickly pluckt away.
B ehold how faſt he's gone, as if he griev'd
E njoying of his life, whilſt here he liv'd.
R are fruits ſoon pluckt, and ſouls to ripeneſs grown
T oo good for earth, are ſnatcht up to the throne.

F ree and unbiaſs'd for the truth he ſtood:
L iv'd a l he knew; knew all that's underſtood:
E ach virtue in him did ſo equal dwel',
M en hardly coul'd perceive which did excel.
I n endleſs bleſs he's now, whilſt mournful I
N othing can think, but ho v he pierc'd the sky,
G ot into heaven, and ſeem'd amaz'd to cry;

R eviewing (O behold!) eternity's rich throne,
F rom living earthly mounted I'm now gone.

—— Vi acem nolo dolorem;
Sed memor æterno tempore vivat Amor.

TO THE

READER.

KING *Solomon* made ſilver in *Jeruſalem* as ſtones, and cedars as the very *Sycamore* trees for abundance. *I would be allowed to ſay, the* author *of this treatiſe is a* New-Teſtament *Solomon, a right* princely divine. *His* works *are truly* ſilver *and* cedar *ones*; *excellently rich in their* ſubjects *and the* management *of them. His rare and royal* liberality (*which the* title-page *is commanded to publiſh*) *maketh them as* plenty *and as* eaſy to be come by, *as the writings of vulgar ſcribes are.*

Unto my diſpoſal it pleaſed him to commit a good number of theſe his books; *which, without his* commiſſion or knowledge, *I aſſume to ſend forth with theſe ſhort* advertiſements.

The author *is that Mr.* Fleming, *of whom in another* * *treatiſe, thou haſt the honourable thoughts of Dr.* Bates, *Mr.* Mede, *Mr.* Howe, *Mr.* Cole, *Mr.* Sylveſter, *Mr.* Williams, *Mr.* Showers. *A Treatiſe laden with the praiſes of ſeveral eminent* church-men, *as well as* Diſſenters, (*as we muſt ſtill* unhappily *diſtinguiſh*).

* Confirming work: Or, great things made plain.

This work *of his, full like unto* Moſes, *was born in* evil-days; *not at all propitious unto ſo* maſculine ſacred iſſues. *By reaſon whereof, it was in a manner* hidden *in theſe dominions, while extolled beyond the ſeas. Indeed the zeal of good families in* Scotland (*and of ſome devout ones in* England) *kept it cloſe unto their* holy Bibles, *valuing it next thereto, becauſe of its mighty ſervice to the* Faith, Life, *and* Joy *thereof. But till* (*through the kindneſs of God*) *the foreſaid* winter-days were paſt, and their rain was over and gone, *this* flower appeared not much in our land. *So that this* third *edition is unto us but as a* firſt.

Heartily I congratulate the needy age, this antidote againſt Atheiſm *and* Medicine againſt the languors of faith and virtue. *For though I do competently know how rich our* London-Empory *is in both, I do not know any equal to Mr.* Fleming's *that are to be found in our ſhops, Wherefore,*

I praiſe *and* thank *thoſe religious perſons, who have promiſed to make known this hitherto hid treaſure. And I humbly and earneſtly beſeech, both* Miniſters *and* private Chriſtians, *eſpecially* Gentlemen, *and the* few Noble, who love God, and are known of Him, *to* conſult *well this Book themſelves, to* commend *it unto their relations, and to* beſtow *it upon the poor in their neigbourhoods.*

With this ſacrifice God will be well pleaſed; *and,* by this ſervice ſhall they gain the good report of all good men, and of the truth it ſelf. *So teſtifieth,*

One ambitious to promote the

Common Salvation,

Bridges-ſtreet *near*
Covent-Garden,
July 17. 1693.

D. BURGESS.

THE

THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

READER.

IT is like you may expect some account of the rise and occasion of this discourse, that on so great and weighty a subject so small an essay should venture abroad, especially in a time, when it seemeth more safe and prudent to keep silence, to be swift to hear, and slow to speak, which seldom hath an after challenge; the author will say little for his apology herein, though he hopeth he may find it more easy to satisfy others, than he did himself: this freedom only he shall take to confess, that sometime it hath been matter of earnest, yea, hath caused some tossing, and exercise upon his spirit, and pressed a more serious enquiry and search, with a respect to his own case, to be perswaded anent the scriptur's divine authority, that godliness is not an empty name or shadow, but of an undoubted truth, which indeed of all other things is the greatest, and of most near concernment: and truly anent that, this grave convincing argument of the scriptur's certain accomplishment, hath not only oft stared him in the face, with a satisfying discovery and impression thereof, as a most quieting and unanswerable demonstration of the truth, but he must also say, that by very remarkable confirmations from the Lord, this hath been so convincingly witnessed to his experience, as leaveth him under engagement (were such a poor testi-

mon

mony of weight) *to put his ſeal to the word, that it falleth not to the ground, neither doth the promiſe of God fail.*

It is a dark time now with the church of Chriſt, which we ſee every where almoſt ſuffering and afflicted, whilſt the whole earth beſides ſeemeth to be at eaſe, chriſtians alſo even beyond others, in their private lot, tryſted with very ſharp trials, though I think ſuffering may be the leaſt of our fear at this day, while Atheiſm doth now appear on ſo formidable a growth, and hath a more threatning aſpect than the rage or violence of men: we ſee a ſad decay likewiſe on the churches abroad, religion every where under a great conſumption, and wearing out, that ſeemeth to have reached it in its vital parts, men ſearch after an unuſual way of ſinning, as if they ſcorned to be wicked at a common and ordinary rate, prejudice eaſily taken up and entertained againſt the way of God, whilſt the good man doth alaſs periſh, without any affecting obſervation thereof, the choice and excellent of the earth plucked away, and none to fill their room; chriſtians burials now frequent, but the birth, and bringing of ſuch to the church, rare. This is indeed a ſad ſubject, and ſo much the ſadder that few are found whoſe eye affecteth their heart, whoſe tears and groaning ſeem to anſwer ſuch a ſtroke and ruin, which now is like to fall under our hand, but I ſhall leave this; prayer will be the beſt cure, and is this day more fit, than complaining, to turn unto him who ſeeth the ways of his people that he may heal them, and can prevent theſe with mercy, who ſeem leaſt fit for the ſame; only two or three ſad remarks of this time, I cannot altogether paſs, which indeed are ſtrange ſymptoms of the churches preſent caſe and diſtemper. 1. *To ſee men own the doctrine of ſanctification, who yet can profeſſedly diſown, yea, make it their work by reproach to beget a prejudice againſt the practice thereof, oh ſtrange! to find ſuch as will dip their pen in gall againſt a tender and ſtrict walk in religion, and revile it in the power thereof, whilſt they do not deny theſe truths and principles that neceſſarily oblige to ſuch a tender practice; who in the moſt grave concerning duties of chriſtianity think it enough to charge their brethren with phariſaical oſtentation and hypocriſy, whilſt they muſt confeſs theſe duties to be unqueſtionably binding, and that they can be no competent judges of ſuch a challenge, which the grave witneſs of the heart and inward parts of men, can only determine.* 2. *It is a ſad remark alſo of the time that Proteſtant writers, profeſſing the Reformed Religion, ſhall ſtate themſelves in oppoſition to the moſt concerning grounds thereof, ſuch as imputed righteouſneſs and juſtification by faith, which are well called* Articulus ſtantis & cadentis Eccleſiæ. *I cannot have that charity, that it is from ignorance, but from a height of malice, that ſome of late reproach the Proteſtant Doctrine, in this great fundamental of juſtification, as if it preſſed believing and reſting upon Chriſt, without reſpect to works and holineſs; I confeſs, we put not inherent righteouſneſs in the room of imputed, though we aſſert each is neceſſary in their own place, the one in order to our right, the other in order to the actual participation of that right, yea, that holineſs is abſolutely neceſſary not only* neceſſitate præcepti, ſed medii, *and juſtifying faith doth neceſſarily require works,* ſed non qua, & quatenus juſtificat, *but ſure, if theſe men grant we are juſtified by the ſatisfaction of Chriſt, they muſt needs confeſs it is by imputation, ſince if the debtor be acquit by the cautioner's payment, is it not by the imputation thereof to him? O ſad! to ſee ſome put their invention upon the rack how to wound the church (yea, a death wound it would be if they could*

could reach their end) in that great truth of imputed righteouſneſs, but it were beſt they denied that 6. v. *of chap.* iv. *to the* Rom. *to be canonick ſcripture, which none can read and ſhift, it being ſo clear, that the bleſſed man is there held forth,* unto whom God imputeth righteouſneſs without works, *ſure that cannot be inherent righteouſneſs, elſe it were* contradictio in adjecto, *I profeſs theſe whatever they pretend, I muſt look on as adverſaries to the Reformed churches, and there is nothing more dangerous than a pirate going forth under a counterfeit flag.* 3. *Is it not likewiſe ſad, yea, aſtoniſhing to ſee miniſters now in theſe times, who are the expreſs embaſſadors of Chriſt given to the church for her edification, ſtand ſo directly croſs to the very end of their work and miniſtry, many of whom may be ſaid, that knowingly, and deliberately they oppoſe piety, that ſuch ſhould perſecute, whoſe work is to feed, and wound inſtead of healing, grieve the ſpirit of the godly, who ſhould be helpers of their joy, that none are a greater plague to corrupt the church, and cauſe the ſacrifice of the Lord be abhorred, than ſome of theſe who ſhould be the ſalt of the earth, yea, none more obſtruct the treaty of the goſpel, betwixt Chriſt and his church, then miniſters who are called the friends of the bridegroom. Oh, what a ſtrange and aſtoniſhing contradiction may this ſeem, but it ſhould be no reproach to that holy and excellent calling of the miniſtry, for of ſuch the ſcripture hath expreſly warned. I confeſs it may be ſaid no Atheiſt like an unſanctified miniſter, yea, no Atheiſm of ſo black a die as theirs, who being ſtill inured with holy things have yet no ſenſe thereof.*

Now in this very dark hour, wherein the church ſeemeth to have fallen in a death like pang, and oh, many of her children in a ſad lethargy, that if we looked in an ordinary way, her wound might ſeem incurable, there are two great and concerning queries that I think ſhould much take us up. The one is to know what the ſcripture ſpeaketh to the church, what ſolid ground of encouragement is there held forth, for truly if we had not that ſure teſtimony of the word, we might fear religion ſhould quite wear out, and truth periſh from the earth, but doth the ſcripture ſpeak peace? all then is well; that, O that is ſufficient ſecurity to put the churches hope beyond further debate, though men ſhould threaten, though the earth were overturned, and the foundation ſhaken, this is a determination above men, above all the rules of human policy, yea, above the ſtars, which fruſtrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad, even that revealed counſel of God, taking place anent his work and people.

I know ſome grave writers of theſe late times, do expreſs their fear that the horrid wickedneſs and apoſtacy of the Gentile *church may at laſt reſolve in the Lord's departure and univerſal darkneſs, that as the rejection of the* Jews *made way for the* Gentiles *incoming, ſo their fall may as remarkably preceed that ſolemn return and reſtauration of the* Jewiſh *church, it is alſo become the fear of many that* Popery *may yet once overturn the whole Reformed churches before Antichriſt fall: but ſince theſe ſad thoughts, nor any appearances of the time, are no part of our* Bible, *we ſhould learn neither to ſtretch our fears nor expectations beyond that which the ſcripture warranteth, and if the Lord be God, and this his very word, let us adhere to it and wait for its accompliſhment. A ſecond querie which is indeed no leſs concerning in ſuch a time, may be anent* Duty, *what ſo imminent an hazard of the*

church, and this great decay of chriſtianity doth moſt preſſingly call for, but this is a ſubject which requireth another pen, and too large, to touch with a paſſing word, yea, we may ſay the great want of theſe days is not anent the diſcovery of duty, but of the practice of known and diſcovered duties, for the ſcripture giveth a certain and diſtinct ſound in the darkeſt time, and hath not left us to doubtful inquiries and debate in this matter, I ſhall therefore leave it with a few things only to be in the general conſidered. 1. *It is ſure, that every time hath its preſent duty, and the wiſe diſcerners thereof will know thence what they ought to do, what work and ſervice the preſent circumſtances of that time call for, ſhall the earth have its ſeaſons wherein things are beautiful, ſhall the ſtork and ſwallow know their time, and yet chriſtians not know how to bring forth fruit in their ſeaſon, and diſcern the ſpecial time and opportunity of duty?* 2. *It is alſo ſure, that every chriſtian in whatſoever capacity or condition as he hath his meaſure and talent, ſo hath ſome work and opportunity of duty, wherein they may ſerve the Lord in their generation, yea, it is not the meaneſt lot or condition that ſhutteth that door upon any, that they have no work for God, who deſire to be faithful for him: Oh that in this threatning time when darkneſs is like to overſpread the church, it were more upon the heart of chriſtians to ſtrive together, and contend by a ſerious improvement of their ſeveral capacities to preſerve religion, and tranſmit the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt to the poſterity, that the chriſtian Parent or Maſter of family did witneſs more that great reſolution in a time when many are drawing back,* but as for me, I and my houſe will ſerve the Lord. 3. *It is found that the moſt eminent and honourable ſervice of the church doth uſually tryſt her in a low and ſuffering condition, when there hath been but little ſtrength, many outward diſadvantages, then both their call and furniture hath been moſt obſervable to confeſs the truth, to endure for the goſpel of Chriſt, to overcome by the word of his teſtimony, a piece of ſervice whereto more proſperous times do not give ſuch an opportunity, yea, it hath been in ſuch a caſe,* Dan. xi. 32. *that theſe who knew their God, were made ſtrong to do exploits.* 4. *It doth much concern us to put an high value on the truth in a time when men muſt either loſe it, or buy it, and O what a choice purchaſe is that which cannot be bought too dear, though at the rate of our liberty, eſtate, credit and reputation, yea, with the loſs of peace when it cometh in competition with it? For it is that great* depoſitum *once delivered to the ſaints, the inheritance of our children, that way whereby Jeſus Chriſt keepeth intercourſe with his bride on the earth, yea, the charter of all our mercies, and of our hope through eternity.* 5. *Though every line of divine truth is ineſtimable, yet it is ſure there is a more preſſing call for our adherence to that truth which is moſt controverted in the time, for it is the word of his patience and the matter of our preſent teſtimony, and it is known through all ages what a ſingular bleſſing hath followed the contending and witneſſing of a few for the truth in a ſpait of publick defection, to keep it alive, when it was like to be ſwallowed up, yea, to effects above rational belief,* Unus *Athanaſius* contra totum orbem, *many ſuch remarks have not been wanting.* 6. *I ſhall only add that which is always neceſſary and binding, yet we may ſay in a time of the church's hazard and ſuffering is more preſſingly called for, even the ſtudy of chriſtian prudence, a duty convincingly neceſſary, for regulating of duties, according to the cir-*

circumſtances of the church's caſe, which doth ſo nearly concern the intereſt and preſervation of religion, that I muſt ſay, a breach in that concord betwixt zeal and chriſtian prudence, when there is not ſome equal reſpect ſtudied in the exerciſe of both, cannot but give the church a ſore wound, this is indeed a large theam, but I ſhall only point at three things. 1. *In our avoiding and being tender to give offence, not only to keep a diſtance from evil, but from the ſmalleſt appearance thereof, I muſt ſay they are bad caſuiſts, and have little reſpect to the churches edification, who make it their work, not ſo much to keep men from ſin, as to ſhew them,* quam prope ad peccatum ſine peccato accedere liceat, O *what a becoming fear is that, not to lay a ſtumbling block in the way of others, to grieve the weak, or confirm ſuch who uſe to found their prejudice againſt the truth, and way of God, upon the miſcarriage of ſuch as profeſs the ſame.* 2. *This excellent ſtudy of chriſtian prudence hath a reſpect to mens taking offence as well as their giving it, to our being ſober in judging in perſonal reflections, to cover and hide the infirmities of others rather than ſpread them, even for the goſpel's ſake, yea, to ſhut as it were our eyes, and caſt a mantle on their nakedneſs, who overtaken with the violence of ſome temptations may yet be ſerviceable to the church, but eſpecially this ſhould preſs us to a watchful regard of any breach, and rent in the church, and to ſtudy an healing ſpirit ſo far as is poſſible without prejudice to truth.* 3. *It is alſo a concerning piece of chriſtian prudence, how to walk wiſely towards theſe who are without, when prejudice againſt the way of God is now in ſuch a growth to ſtudy how we may convince, gain ground, and by chriſtian prudent and tender carriage conciliate reſpect to the truth, and thus commend holineſs, and theſe who profeſs it to the conſcience of men, to ſtudy that rule of expediency much in things of themſelves warrantable, what fitneſs and advantage preſent circumſtances may offer, or deny for edification, and promoting that great intereſt of the goſpel in our converſe with men.*

I ſhall now ceaſe to trouble you further, only would premit ſome few things with a reſpect to the ſubject of this following eſſay. 1. *Should we not with wonder and aſtoniſhment look on this great record of the ſcripture? by which the glorious Majeſty of God doth ſpeak to men, yea, doth as certainly communicate his counſel and mind, we may ſay more certainly, than if we had an immediate audible voice from heaven, O could we have ſuch ordinary thoughts of this, if we conſider how near God cometh therein to us? I think if there were but one corner of the earth, tho' in the remoteſt parts, where men might go and get a look of ſo wonderful and important a thing as God's expreſs will written and ſent from heaven to the earth, anent our duty here, and bleſſedneſs for ever, ſhould we not think it worth our croſſing the ſea, and of the greateſt expence of time or labour? it is truely a wonder how we can read and conſider the ſcripture without wondring.* 2. *It is a great concernment to know that the ſcripture hath ſuch a witneſs as experience, and that there is ſuch a trade and correſpondence as this betwixt the ſaints and the word, which lieth not in the common road of the world. O what an empty thing ſhould religion be if it had not this word* experience *in its grammar, that ſecret and ſure mark whereby the chriſtian knoweth the ſcripture is of God, how thus the Lord hath oft ſealed their inſtruction in a dark plunge; how life and power, enlivening influences to the melting of heart, hath oft tryſted them there in a very dead frame; and now they know that verily God heareth prayer, now they are perſuaded and have learned by the croſs that he is indeed a comforter, yea, many can ſhew how by the word their firſt acquaintance with the Lord did begin, how ſome par-*

particular truth, like a pickle of corn thrown in at their heart, by the bleſſing of the great husbandman was made to take life and grow. 3. *It much concerneth us to know what an excellent key the ſcripture is to unlock that ſealed book of providence, and that no other key can fit the ſame, many have tried another way but loſt themſelves on the ſearch, and the more they preſt by human wiſdom, they became the more dark. I truly think there is not a more ſatisfying diſcovery within time than this, to trace divine truth back until we ſee its firſt breaking forth out of his eternal decree and council who is the author thereof, how thence it taketh hold of the word which is in the adequate ſign, and declaration of his purpoſe, and than how the word taketh hold of his work and providence, where we may ſee the face and condition of the church clearly written out through all the changes of time, how providence keepeth a certain and ſteady courſe even amidſt the moſt perplexed motions and reelings of the earth, yea, how all things, even theſe which would ſeem moſt contradictory, run within that ſtraight channel of the word, and cannot go without theſe bounds.* 4. *It is the principal and moſt concerning ſcripture promiſes, that are only touched in this following diſcourſe, theſe which carry along with them a clear continued ſeries of the church's condition through time, and ſhews the moſt remarkable changes of her lot, for it is clear that in diverſe prophecies and in a different manner the ſpirit doth point at one and the ſame thing: and truly it ſhould cauſe no miſtake or prejudice, that we find ſeveral of the ſcripture prophecies expreſt in ſuch dark terms, ſince the wiſdom of God ſaw it fit that for a time theſe truths ſhould be locked up, and ſealed; but now light hath ſo far broken up with the event, as we may ſee how very ſignificant and ſuitable to the matter theſe moſt dark ænigmatick terms are.* 5. *We ſhould upon no account ſhut our ears where the ſcripture is clear, and giveth us ground to wait that the outgoings of the Lord for his people in their deliverance, and for the deſtruction of his enemies now in theſe laſt times, ſhall be very glorious, yea, by ſome ſtately and ſtupendious acts of providence that he ſhall accompliſh his judgment on Antichriſt: neither muſt we take a prejudice at truth, becauſe of the wild fancies of many who would extend it beyond its bounds, or that near reſemblance which the terror of ſome in this time may ſeem to have thereto, for that hath been an old ſtratagem of the Devil to prejudge the world at ſome of the truths of God, by ſetting up a counterfeit thereto. I ſhall add no more, only what account is given upon the cloſe of the laſt argument of ſome remarkable paſſages of providence in the late times, as herein the author hath ſome confidence to profeſs he did endeavour what could be attained for certainty of the ſame, and if any circumſtance of theſe relations ſhould be found a miſtake, he dare ſay before Him who is greater than our conſcience, it was not the neglect of a ſerious inquiry, ſo he muſt alſo permit, the inſerting of them was upon no further intent, than to be a witneſs to that truth of* the Lord's eminent appearance for his church in the laſt days: *it would be of great uſe and profit to the church that ſome more fitly qualified would ſtudy a more large collection of this kind. O that this might go forth with a bleſſing from him who by the meaneſt things can ſerve himſelf and promote the edification of his church, and that the Lord would raiſe ſome up with much of his ſpirit to make a further ſearch and enquiry in this great and weighty truth.*

THE Fulfilling of the Scripture.

PART I.

THERE are two means by which the bleſſed Majeſty of God hath choſen, to reveal himſelf to the ſons of men, his *word* and his *works*, which may be called theſe two great luminaries, for giving light to the Church, though the one be the greater, I mean doth more clearly ſhine forth, yea doth communicate light to the other; theſe men muſt not divide, which by ſo ſtrait a tye the Lord hath joined, and by a marvellous correſpondence hath ſet the one over againſt the other, that it may be eaſy to ſee his faithfulneſs, and the *accompliſhment of the ſcripture* therein, and indeed this is a great concerning truth, that calleth for a ſerious ſtudy, the ſolid perſuaſion of which ſhould afford a ſweet ground of repoſe, and reſt for the ſoul, though the earth were all in a combuſtion round about, and give a ſatisfying anſwer to our moſt ſollicitous thoughts and fears. Now this being the intended ſubject of the following diſcourſe, I ſhall firſt touch it a little in the general, and then hold forth ſome more particular grounds, whence it may be clearly demonſtrated.

I. That the *ſcripture of God hath a certain accompliſhment here in the world*, and what is to be underſtood by the ſame, I ſhall endeavour to clear in theſe things, which may be conſidered.

1. This is the very unfolding of the Lord's decree, and ſecret purpoſe, the bringing forth of his work, now within time, to the view of angels and men, which was before him in the depth of his thoughts and counſel from eternity; it is an opening up of the ſealed book, which we muſt not underſtand to be that ſecret roll of election, and the book of life, wherein the names of the elect are written; but *liber fatidicus*, the ſealed book of God's diſpenſations in the world, ſhewing out his counſels and deſigns which ſhould be brought forth in the after-ages of time; for as the Lord did fully comprehend what he was to do, and all that was to befal his church and

people, from the beginning to the end, long long before there was a beginning, before the mountains were formed; ſo hath he copied and written out his heart in the word hereanent, wherein he hath moſt plainly ſhewed forth, what were his bleſſed purpoſes, and counſel of old; and thus the thoughts of his heart, his word, and his works do ſweetly agree, and each one wonderfully anſwers to another, for his work doth bring forth and accompliſh his word, that his decree and counſel from all eternity may take place.

2. The ſcriptures accompliſhment is the tranſcript and writing of it over in providence, where we may ſee and admire how the word doth ſhine upon all the paths and footſteps of the Lord towards his church in every age, and gives light to the ſame, and what an evident reflection his work hath again upon the word; ſo that through the whole ſeries and courſe of providence in the earth, we have a moſt exact portraiture and image of the ſcripture, and anſwering one to another, as face anſwers to face in the glaſs, where it may be eaſy to diſcern the copy by the principal, and that reſemblance which is betwixt the building and that excellent pattern and model which is held forth thereof in the word.

3. The accompliſhment of the ſcripture is the very turning that, which was the object of our faith and contemplation, to be the object of our ſenſe and feeling; it is the real birth and bringing forth theſe truths unto the world, in their appointed time and ſeaſon, concerning the church and particular chriſtians, which were hid in that womb of the promiſe, and many dark predictions of the word; it is ſuch a thing as giveth the promiſes and prophecies a viſible being, yea bringeth truth ſo near within the reach of our ſenſes, that we may even touch, as it were, and handle the words of life. O what an excellent interpreter is experience! *taſte and ſee*, for thus the ſerious chriſtian getteth a view of the ſcripture and ſpiritual things, which the moſt ſubtil and piercing eye of unſanctified ſchoolmen cannot reach, yea, by the practice of truth, and nearneſs to God, and retiring of the ſoul to him, hath oft got more light in an hour, than others by many daies putting their judgment and invention upon the rack.

4. This is God's own ſeal, which he putteth to the word to confirm and ratify the ſame: I do not only mean the ſecret ſeal of the ſpirit within, but ſomething more external, that ſolemn teſtimony of his works, whereby he doth every day appeal to mens conſciences concerning his truth; for his works are very manifeſt, whereon there is ſo clear an engravening of his truth and faithfulneſs, that as the impreſs and image of the ſeal is upon the wax, men may alſo ſee whoſe ſuperſcription and image that is, which doth appear on ſuch and ſuch paſſages of providences.

5. This is ſomething we are not to ſeek only in the extraordinary acts of providence, or in any ſingular and eminent path of a chriſtian experience, nay it doth ſhine forth in the ſmalleſt and moſt caſual things that fall out, yea in every page of that great volume of providence may be clearly read.

6. The ſcriptures accompliſhment is ſuch a thing as concerns every chriſtian in his perſonal caſe to which his ordinary experience doth relate, whereof theſe have a large regiſter, what of the word hath been certainly proven in the ſeveral ſteps and changes of life, whoſe practice doth much lye betwixt improvement of the word, and obſervation how it is fulfilled; ſuch can witneſs how under a ſpiritual decay to be carnally minded is death, and when it's well, that great peace they have who love God's law; they have oft found that in a ſtrait he is a very preſent help, and in the way of duty that it's ſurely good to draw near to him, and in the cloſe of their life, can from many remarkable and convincing providences, declare the truth and faithfulneſs,

fulneſs of God: and truly whilſt I ſpeak here of the chriſtian's experience, I think it's ſad, and a great ſhort coming, that there is not a more ſerious improvement of it for this end, which is a very concerning duty on ſuch who have taſted that the Lord is gracious; and O what an excellent addition would this be to their teſtament, when they are to leave the world, to leave a teſtimony behind them to the faithfulneſs of God in his word, and thus put their ſeal to the ſame, from what they have oft proven by ſure experience, for this ſhould prove a ſingular help to ſtrengthen others, and ſpread abroad the fame and good report of religion; yea, thus one generation ſhould declare the works of the Lord to another, and tranſmit the memory of his goodneſs to ſucceeding ages.

7. This is ſomething which not only the chriſtian's experience doth witneſs, and in every time take place, but hath alſo a peculiar reference to theſe ages and periods of times, wherein ſuch particular truths ſhould have their accompliſhment; for it's true, that the prophets of old did not only in their predictions hold forth in general, the truth and certainty of theſe things, which ſhould fall out, but they alſo inquired and ſearched diligently what manner of time the ſpirit, by them, did point at, 1 *Pet.* i. 11. For 'tis truly clear, that a part of the word was under the law, to have its peculiar accompliſhment; that part of it alſo under the Meſſias's kingdom, in the daies of the goſpel ſhould be fulfilled, and we find a very concerning part thereof belongs to their latter times; and theſe are betwixt ſuch periods of time, and revolution of the church's caſe, and the bringing forth of ſuch a part of the ſcripture to a performance, a very certain and undoubted connection. 'Tis true we do not yet well underſtand (which will be one of the laſt manifeſtations the church ſhall have at the end of time, when the myſtery of God is finiſhed) how to ſort the event exactly to the word, but it is ſure (and were worthy of our ſtudy and obſervation) how every age hath ſomething of the ſcripture peculiar thereto, yea carrieth forward the Lord's work and deſign a further ſtep: may we not ſee how one age fulfilleth ſuch a part of the church's ſufferings appointed for her, and puts ſome great tryal and ſad perſecution over her head which ſhe was to meet with? whilſt an other age carrieth her thorow an other change, and giveth her a time of reſt and breathing, how ſuch a time bringeth antichriſt forward to his height, and ſuch a following age begins the turn of the Church's caſe, yea every ſeveral period and revolution of time, ſtill addeth ſomething to that excellent hiſtory of the word and providence which we have ſince the beginning, and bringeth forth ſomething further into the world of the Lord's counſel and deſign about his church.

8. The accompliſhing of the ſcripture is ſuch a thing, we are to look after in a ſpecial way here, which concerns this militant and travelling condition of the church; for if the ſcriptures were once fully accompliſhed, and the great myſtery of God therein finiſhed, there were then nothing more to do, his work of providence were at an end, and time ſhould be no more. This is ſomething that is not here perfected at once, but is ſtill gradually carrying on, and then ſhall be compleat at the reſurrection of the juſt, and ſecond coming of the Lord, which is the laſt part of canonick ſcripture to be made out, when both his work and his word, and time, ſhall be all finiſhed together; but while the ſaints are yet by the way, they have the written word, and all theſe precious promiſes therein for preſent uſe and encouragement, for that is its proper work to take them ſafe thorow this labyrinth of the world, and when it hath brought them to the land, it hath no more to do; there will be then no more need for a chriſtian to go to a promiſe,

and

and adventure upon it; we ſhall then no more watch with the watchmen in a dark and ſtormy night, and hope for the breaking of the day; faith then ſhall not be at a ſtand how ſuch a word ſhall be made out, becauſe of invincible difficulties in its way: no, then it hath done its work, and that which is written ſhall be ſwallowed up in that which is ſeen and enjoyed, all the ſtreams of our encouragement will then loſe themſelves in a greater depth. O then it's finiſhed and done what all the promiſes, prophecies, and threatnings of the word was bringing forth, and then no more need of ſomething as a pledge and earneſt in hand to them who have the full poſſeſſion of the inheritance, under whoſe feet the God of peace hath trod ſatan and all their enemies.

9. I ſhall add this, The accompliſhment of the ſcripture, is ſomething which is not only demonſtrate to a chriſtian by ſenſible influences, and God's ſecret working with his ſpirit, but is made out to the obſervation of men in the way of providence, and not only witneſſed by that internal evidence of the ſpirit, but by an external teſtimony, which both rationally holdeth this out to the judgment, and ſenſibly to the ſight and experience; and this is the ſtrongeſt and moſt full of all outward evidences, ſince the world muſt ſhut their eyes if they do not ſee it, and a chriſtian muſt deny what he both ſeeth and feeleth, if he denies witneſs to this.

II. We ſhall conſider the *accompliſhment of the ſcripture* as that which *is the Lord's peculiar work and deſign in the world*, and that great buſineſs which is upon the wheels of providence, amidſt the various changes and revolutions which are here within time, for bringing about whereof the bleſſed thoughts of his heart are fixed and unalterable. This is indeed a grave and ſerious truth, worthy to be more noticed and laid to heart by men, that the glorious providence of God which goeth throughout the earth, and doth particularly reach all things which came to paſs, the ſmalleſt as well as the greateſt intereſts of men in all theſe, doth move certainly and infallibly for the accompliſhing of the ſcripture, which is that great thing God hath before his eyes; for it is no perſonal intereſts of men, how great ſoever they be, that can anſwer this end, it is ſomething beyond the ſetting up of kings, or overturning kingdoms and nations, that he doth mind amidſt theſe various changes which are in the world; 'tis ſome greater thing than that which we moſt notice, the Lord thereby deſigns how ſuch a party is advanced, and others brought low, for theſe things come within the reach of his care and providence, in ſo far as the fulfilling of the ſcripture is therein concerned; the outmaking of the promiſes and threatnings, one ſyllable whereof he doth more value than all the crowns and kingdoms of the earth, yea will not let it fall to the ground, though it ſhould be at the rate of laying cities and countries deſolate, for it's in this the Lord taketh pleaſure, and exerciſeth his bleſſed thoughts, even the bringing about what he hath ſpoken in his Word.

Now to clear this further, I ſhall hold forth theſe following grounds, whence it may appear.

Firſt, The fulfilling of the Scripture, and written Word is ſo great a thing, and of ſuch concernment, that the bleſſed Majeſty of God thought it worthy of a place in his heart from all eternity, this was before him in his thoughts and counſels of old; even that marvellous work which ſhould be the after-product, and manifeſting of his Word to his Church here within time, and ſurely was ſuch a plot and contrivance that as no leſs than infinite love, wiſdom and power, was required to bring it about, ſo it was well becoming the Majeſty of God, and worthy to be the work of all the

the three bleſſed perſons of the Trinity; O if we could go down a little to this deep, and ſee the wonders that are there, we would find that knowledge which uſually leſſeneth our admiration of other things, would heighten it here, it would be new to us every day to think how great and marvelous a thing that is which the Word is bringing forth.

2. It is upon this, even the performance of the Word that the preſent encouragement, and the after bleſſedneſs of the ſaints doth lye, for the great intereſt of the Church is adventured upon the Word, and embarked with it, which ſhould be loſt, yea their ſtock and treaſure which is laid up in heaven, and all that a Chriſtian is worth, which is laid up in the promiſe, were then periſhed, if the Scripture ſhould want an accompliſhment, the Godly man hath then run and laboured in vain, and theſe who are fallen aſleep in Chriſt have dy'd in a ſad deluſion, providence would be like the work of the fooliſh builder, who begun and knew not how to finiſh. O how highly then is the Lord concerned in fulfilling of his Word? That he may perfect what concerns his People, and having ſurely payed the price put them alſo in poſſeſſion.

3. There is yet more than the intereſts of Angels and men, yea and than heaven and earth is worth that depends upon the outmaking of the Scripture; the glory of God and eſpecially the praiſe of that great attribute his *faithfulneſs*, which he will have no leſs ſhine forth in the performance of his Word, than his power and wiſdom in this great fabrick of the univerſe, and theſe marvellous productions of nature; for he hath magnified his Word above all his works, therefore is his heart greatly ſet upon this, even the bringing to paſs what he hath ſpoken, which if in the leaſt ſhould fail, were no leſs than to make God a lyar, and falſify his Word, who is through all the Church known by this bleſſed Name, *The God of truth.*

4. We ſhall conſider this, as that great truſt, which is put in his hand who only in heaven and earth was found worthy to open the Book of Gods decrees and counſels, and looſe the ſeals thereof, a truſt which the Lord did not adventure upon the Angels, the ſmalleſt promiſe being ſuch as requires no leſs than an omnipotent power and the arm of *Jehovah* to bring it about; for which end, he whom the father hath anointed, is gone forth as a mighty man who rejoiceth to run his race, that he may perform his Word, and through this great deſign in the adminiſtration of providence, about his Church and People which he will not ceaſe or give over, until the myſtery of God in the Scripture, and all that was ſpoken by the Prophets be put to a cloſe, when heaven and earth at the pouring out of the laſt vial, ſhall give that ſolemn ſhout and exclamation, *It is finiſhed, it is finiſhed.* O if this were once fully perfect, there would be no more to do, then the Winter were paſt and the ſummer come, the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb ſhould be heard, becauſe the bride hath made herſelf ready, then let all the trees of the wood rejoice, the hills break forth into ſinging, and all that is therein be glad, becauſe the Scripture and great deſign thereof is fully finiſhed, and the day of the perfect liberty of the Sons of God is come.

5. The accompliſhment of the Scripture is of ſuch concernment that nothing can be done until it be once finiſhed, for this, time muſt wait; the Sun muſt keep its courſe, and the ordinances of the Heaven continue as they are, the World is but a ſcaffold until this building be perfected, for this the grave doth ſtill retain her priſoners and the duſt of the Saints muſt yet reſt in hope, the creation ſtill groaneth, and the marriage ſupper of the Lamb is deferred, the cry of the Souls under the altar get not a full return, until all that is written in the Word be fulfilled.

6. We ſhall conſider, this is the great thing which the Lord this day is carrying on, even the accompliſhment of his Word, for this is moſt brought upon debate of any thing beſides; the World challengeth it, and the hearts of the godly do oft call it in queſtion; the Atheiſt ſcoffs at it, and ſaith, where is the promiſe of his coming, there are often to appearance inſuperable difficulties in the way of its performance, therefore doth the Majeſty of God ſo much concern himſelf in this, for bringing about of which he is in a holy way reſtleſs, and providence in an unceſſant motion, until he hath done that which he hath ſpoken in his Word. It was for this cauſe that the Scripture might be accompliſhed, that the Word was made fleſh, and he who counted it no robbery to be equal with God, did take upon himſelf the form of a Servant, this is of ſuch account in his eyes, that what time he ſpeaks concerning a Nation or People, ere it come not to paſs, he will rather put forth omnipotency, for the working of miracles, and change the very courſe of nature, for this, he will make the deep dry, make a way through the red Sea, and cauſe *Jordan* ſtand as in heapes, that he may keep promiſe to his People; if there be no way for bringing about his Word, but through a Sea of blood, and over the bones and carcaſſes of his enemies, he will do it and bring it to paſs, tho' walled Cities, and the ſons of *Anack* mighty and ſtrong ſhould ſtand in the way thereof. *Abraham*'s old age and *Sarah*'s dead womb muſt not fruſtrate this, if the promiſe of the Churches reſtauration cannot be made out without a wonder ſhewed upon dry bones ſcattered at the graves mouth, this ſhall not be wanting; when God ſaith he'll bring down the enemies of his Church, if the duſt of the ground ſhould ariſe, down they muſt come; how many great deſigns of men hath this bleſſed deſign (that the counſel of the Lord may ſtand) cruſhed and broken? ſo that their work and counſel hath been as the Spider's web, when it ſtood croſs to this end, the godly need not fear, that he be not a preſent help in time of trouble, for he will keep his word herein, though the Earth ſhould be overturned and the Mountains caſt into the midſt of the Sea; O who hath reſiſted his counſel! What are all theſe viciſſitudes and changes here in the World? But making way for the Scriptures accompliſhment, with what deſire doth he move towards this end? So that as in *Zechary* vi. *v.* 8. the inſtruments by him appointed for executing his judgment and the threatnings of the Word, it's ſaid they have quieted his Spirit, his decrees are mountains of braſs, which are unchangeable, the thought of his heart takes place in all generations, therefore the Word which is gone forth out of his mouth ſhall not return in vain, but the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand.

III. *The accompliſhment of the Scripture is a truth very clear and manifeſt*, whereof none can pretend ignorance, if they do not ſhut their eyes, and force their own light from the fear of ſuch a diſcovery; for the obſtruction doth not lye in the darkneſs of the object or that men cannot ſee this, ſince we have it ſo clearly held forth in great and legible characters, nay, we muſt ſay the cauſe is culpable, there is much of the will in it, which renders ſuch an ignorance without excuſe. O that this ſhould be ſo little look'd after, a matter of ſuch near and weighty concernment, when there needs not another demonſtration, but *come and ſee* the works of the Lord through the earth, for he hath here ſo far condeſcended to his People, to bring the truth near, that they even feel the ſame, yea doth in a manner ſay to every one as to *Thomas*, *put in your hands*, touch the Word and truth thereof, and be no longer faithleſs, taſte but and ſee, that the Lord is good and that he is true in what he hath ſpoken.

We are indeed to look after a more clear and full diſcovery of this truth the nearer the Church is to the end of time; there is a labyrinth as it were of turnings and windings, through which we may ſee the Word oft brought about, ſo as we loſe ſight thereof, and are ready to ſtagger about its performance; but its as true that the moſt eminent confirmations the ſaints ever had of truth, has been after the greateſt ſhakings concerning it, yea, the Lord hath in all ages, ſo viſibly ſealed his Word by its performance, that we may ſay, can he be a chriſtian and a ſtranger to this in his experience, and a ſerious on-looker on providence and the diſpenſations of the time, wherein he lives, and a ſtranger to it in his obſervation; yea, can any be ſo wholly brutiſh, not to diſcern a thing ſo clear that oftimes theſe, who run, may read?

But to ſpeak a little more to this I ſhall here point at ſome things that may ſhew how manifeſt this truth is.

1. Is it not very clear, which we ſee every day brings to light? A truth ſo conſpicuous, both in Gods ordinary way with his Church, and in the ſeveral ſteps and paſſages of a Chriſtian life: For theſe mercies which bring the Word and promiſe to paſs, are new every morning, and cry aloud, if we could hear, great is his faithfulneſs, this is indeed tryed; and needs there more to convince a blind man that his ſight is reſtored to him, but that he certainly ſeeth; ſure they never wanted confirmations here who do but ſeriouſly ſeek to be confirmed.

2. Is it not a clear truth, which not only is found upon the exacteſt tryal; but is witneſſed by ſuch who ever tryed it in their moſt preſſing ſtraits and extremity; for it's in the darkeſt night this truth hath moſt brightly ſhined, and theſe more remarkable ventorious acts of faith, have they not ſtill brought forth moſt convincing experiments thereof? We may ſay there is none can give a better account of the performance of the Word, than theſe who againſt hope, have believed in hope, that this never made them aſhamed.

3. Is it not alſo clear, whereof there are ſuch ſolemn extraordinary confirmations in all ages? For that his name is near, his wondrous works declare, I am ſure no time could ever deny its witneſs, how by great convincing providences, both of judgment and mercy it hath been ſo ſealed, as hath forced Atheiſts to keep ſilence, no time wherein the Church had not cauſe to erect a pillar, and engrave thereon, *We have ſeen with our eyes* the great and wondrous works of the Lord, by which he hath witneſſed the truth of his Word.

4. Is it not a manifeſt truth which even in the moſt ſtrange and dark footſteps of providence ſo clearly ſhineth forth, theſe which at the firſt look are an aſtoniſhment, and hard to be underſtood, yet after moſt clearly verify the Scripture, that whilſt the Lords way goeth out of our ſight, yea, out of the ordinary road of his working, through a labyrinth of turnings and croſs diſpenſations, yet at length it doth evidently clear and diſentangle it ſelf, which men may oft ſee break forth as the Sun out of a dark cloud that ſhineth the more brightly the more it was obſcured.

5. Is it not very clear which can be demonſtrated by ſuch viſible effects in theſe great changes of the World? For *the fulfilling of the Scripture* is not a thing hid in a corner, but oft publiſhed on the houſe tops, that men may ſee legibly written upon Kingdoms and Nations, the deſolate ruins and deveſtation of cities and houſes great and fair, which are made to be without inhabitants, ſo as theſe who go by may clearly read the cauſe, and bear that witneſs, *Lo there is ſin viſibly puniſhed according to the Word.*

6. How

6. How clear is this, which we have ſo evidently drawn out, and acted over in a Chriſtian walk? For what elſe is the ſpiritual converſation of ſuch, theſe viſible effects and evidences of the grace of God all along a Chriſtians way, but a viſible convincing witneſs to the performance of the word? Hath not ſuch a very audible echo, and reſound to that which is the great drift and ſcope of the Scripture; where men may ſee the Bible turn'd over into a practical Hiſtory, written forth and acted on the heart and converſation of the ſaints, as on a ſtage or theatre: the Word living, ſpeaking, moving, and clearly diffuſing itſelf through all the veins, as it were, and conduits of a Chriſtian's life, ſo that if the truth and reality of the grace of God be a thing manifeſt and unqueſtionable, we muſt alſo ſee therein the real performance of the Scripture.

7. I ſhall add, we may clearly ſee how one part of the Scripture is nothing elſe but the punctual fulfilling and accompliſhment of the other; how that which was ſhadowed out by dark types under the law and held in prophecy through the old Teſtament, is written before our eyes in a plain and real hiſtory in the New Teſtament, and that the goſpel is only a fulfilling of the Law and the Prophets.

IV. Though it is very manifeſt, and by undeniable proofs can be demonſtrated, that the Scripture hath a real accompliſhment and doth certainly take place in the conſtant courſe of providence here in the world, that I am ſure if men do not darken themſelves they can be no ſtrangers to ſuch a thing; yet we muſt ſay, *This truth which moſt nearly concerns us, is to the moſt of men* (even ſuch who ſeem to give a large aſſent to the Word) *a myſtery and dark riddle.* There are few who do but enquire if there be ſuch a thing, if the promiſes and threatnings have indeed a certain evidence; few do ſeriouſly ponder the providences of God in which the truth and faithfulneſs of the Word ſhineth forth, that they may thereby be further confirmed, we ſee that too many (alas too many) the great concernments of the Law and everlaſting happineſs are a trivial and an impertinent buſineſs, this is a truth, the World doth paſs without regarding: ſuch as ſport at Religion when they come to earneſt here, dare not ſtand before this diſcovery, it concerneth them much to reconcile their principles with their practice, their fear begetteth hatred, and both put their wit and invention on the rack how to diſpute away any remainder of a conſcience, to impriſon their light, and under the pretext of reaſon, run down godlineſs and the abſolute neceſſity thereof, yea, beſides doth not ſenſuality, wherein many wallow and ſteep themſelves, ſo dull and drown the ſoul, put ſuch an interpoſition of the Earth betwixt them and this truth as wholly darkens it? And, oh how ſad, that many having a large profeſſion to be Chriſtians ſcarce ever knew, what it is to put the Word to an eſſay and tryal in the concernments of their life, to have their light followed with experience, wherein the very truth and reality of Religion lieth.

To clear this, I ſhall hold forth ſome things which may ſhew how little this truth of the Scriptures accompliſhment is known or ſtudied by the moſt of men.

The abounding of ſo much Atheiſm that there are ſo many who not only diſclaim the practice of that Religion they ſeem to profeſs, but do ſtate themſelves in a moſt direct oppoſition to the rules and principles thereof, theſe to whom the Scripture is but as a romance, yea, do only converſe therewith to prove their wit and parts in impunging the ſame; who avowedly mock at the judgments and providences of God; I confeſs theſe may be reckoned Monſters, a very prodigy in the time, wherein they live, though alas, it

is

is not the leaſt part of the World; and which is ſtrange, we ſee the moſt horrid Atheiſts do uſually abound where the light of the Goſpel hath moſt ſhined; the ſavage places of the Earth bring forth no ſuch monſtrous births as are hatch'd within the viſible Church; for thus the judgment of God putteth a blacker dye on them than others; O what a terrible ſound ſhould the fulfilling of the Scripture have in men's ears if they once came to have ſerious thoughts thereof, ſince they cannot admit this but they muſt certainly read their own ſentence of death, which a few days ſhall put in execution, and if the Scripture be true, they are then unſpeakably miſerable.

2. That indifferency which we ſee amongſt men about Religion, and the moſt concerning truths of Scripture doth ſhew how little this is known or laid to heart, whence there is ſuch a generation who do not profeſſedly deny the Scripiure, yet can turn it over in a ſchool probleme, and wonders that men ſhould engage ſo far upon it; it is not that it is hid from them, but they truly chooſe to hide themſelves from it, as more ſuitable to that intereſt they drive, that the truth of God ſhould be rather a matter of opinion than of faith, a thing which they would diſpute but not believe; but O, what other thoughts would a clear ſight of this cauſe? That within ſo few days the truths and threatnings of the Word ſhall be ſad earneſt; the fulfilling whereof no ſharpneſs of wit no ſubtil arguments will be able to evade.

3. That there is ſo much barren theory of divine truths in the world, with ſo little ſerious Chriſtian diligence, doth it not ſadly witneſs how ſmall acquaintance men have with this truth? Whence we ſee ſo great a part of theſe who profeſſedly acknowledge the word, and are daily converſing with it, yet can give no other account thereof but report, ſo many that can ſatisfyingly diſcourſe of the Scripture, could never put their Seal to it, that *God is true therein*, whence are ſo many great ſchool divines and able Miniſters for parts, ſuch viſible Atheiſts in their way and practice? Is it not, they really judge Divinity and Religion, rather a ſcience and matter of ſpeculation than a matter of ſenſe and feeling, which men ſhould more live than ſpeak, and cannot be known without experience the true end of knowledge; but, O this cannot be found in books, men will not meet with it in a throng of choiceſt notions, it confoundeth the wiſe, and diſputer of this world, whilſt the meaneſt and moſt ſimple Chriſtian oft knoweth more than theſe of greateſt parts.

4. The great Hypocriſy which is in the world, I mean within the viſible Church, doth too clearly ſhew that this truth is little thought on or laid to heart; for what is that falſe ſhew and appearance (which we may ſay is not a ſin, but the very ſinfulneſs of ſin) Is it not the height of Atheiſm? and a real contradiction in their practice to this, that the Scripture of God is true and will have an unqueſtionable accompliſhment, O could any be ſo monſtrouſly irrational, to drive this poor plot how to appear that which they are not, to be at ſuch pains to act the part handſomly of a ſerious Chriſtian, to perſonate his tears and grief, his ſpiritual frame, his zeal for God, if he did think gravely on this truth, and did believe the threatnings of the Word; that they will ſurely take place and be within a little no complement, but ſad earneſt, and that he is every hour ſtanding under that Scripture-woe againſt Hypocrites? I am ſure it would make his hair ſtand upright, his joynts looſe; and his thighs ſmite one upon another, could he but ſeriouſly think upon this.

5. Theſe unwarrantable ways which in a time of tryal men take for their eſcape, may witneſs this, that the word they do not judge a ſure ground to

adventure on; whence is there hesitation in suffering times? From that day many taking their leave of Christ, who have rather chosed sin than affliction; O is it not? They judge the testimony of the God of truth is not sufficient security to carry them through such a strait, and are not fully perswaded that it must come to pass what he hath promised, for if this were, they should reckon it their greatest safety to embark their interest on so sure a ground, and with much quietness repose their soul and disburthen their care by putting it over on the Word.

6. What doth the frequent discouragement and uncomfortable walk of the People of God speak forth, doth it not witness how little they are in earnest with this great truth of the Scriptures accomplishment or establish'd therein. What meaneth these distrustful fears and perplexed complaints: if their eyes be but open to know, they have such a well as the promise of God at their hand; how is it that the smallest straits are so puzling, and ready to out-wit them, that they so usually stumble at the cross? And as things from without do appear, the encouragement made to ebb and flow? Is not here the cause? That they stagger at the promise whilst probabilities in some visible way do not go along for its performance: It's truly easy to have some sweet notions of faith at a distance, but whilst the tryal comes near, upon such a close approach, that there is not another way, but to put the whole stress of their particular interest on the Word, and on it alone many are then at a stand, because they are not thoroughly assured that though the earth should be overturned, there is an absolute necessity for the promise of God to take place.

Now from these things may it not appear that this grave truth of the Scriptures accomplishment is but little known or study'd? I confess we may think on it with astonishment, how a matter so nearly concerning is not more our work, there are indeed many things worthy to be known, but our short life can scarce allow time or give leisure for the study thereof, but O this, though we had only two days to live I think might require a person to be sure and perswaded concerning the truth of that whereon our heaven and eternal blessedness lyeth, to which we must lay the dead hold when we are in the passage at the strange step betwixt time and eternity. O what a wonder! how rational Souls who walk on the border of the greatest hope and fear imaginable, can yet be so unconcerned there anent; such serious thoughts might force men to retire and go sit alone; and truly these things gravely considered, may seem strange and hard to reconcile.

1. That there is such a thing as the very Word and Testimony of God this day upon record, wherewith we have so much to do, which doth offer it self to men's tryal and exactest search, and yet we put it so little to that touchstone that we may know it upon another account than report or hear-say.

2. How in a matter of such high importance as salvation through all eternity, and the ground of this hope, men should take the truth on an implicit faith or satisfy themselves with a common assent thereto, as though it were enough to witness our believing the same, because we did never doubt or call it in question, I am sure men would not be so lax and so easy to satisfy in the most common interest they have here in the World.

3. How can men render to others a reason of their hope when it is enquired who did never ask a reason of this at themselves, or will these seal the truth with their blood, who never had it sealed upon the heart by experience.

4. Whence

4. Whence is it that men can have comfort in Scripture who are not well grounded in the faith thereof? Indeed theſe who are ſolidly perſwaded about the truth and its certain accompliſhment may have much joy and peace, whilſt they know the ground of their confidence can bear up any ſtreſs or burden they lay upon it; and for what end did the Lord witneſs the certainty of his word by two immutable things, wherein 'tis impoſſible for him to lie, but that from ſo ſure and ſtrong a ground, his people might have ſtrong conſolation?

5. How can any think to adventure their immortal ſoul upon that whereon they fear to venture an outward intereſt, or put over their deareſt things in his hand and keeping who could never ſay, they know in whom they believed?

6. May it not ſeem ſtrange that men can believe a certain performance of the Word and promiſes, and not be more deeply affected therewith? O is this true, ſhall it ſurely come to paſs, and not one jot thereof fall to the ground, and ſhould it not cauſe us awake in the night and keep us company? Ought we not to think our ſelves at a loſs that day wherein we take not a turn in the meditation of divine truth if we be ſure that theſe muſt take place?

7. It would add, if this be indeed the Scripture of God which ſurely hath an accompliſhment. O how are we ſo little Chriſtians? Why do men's walk ſo ſadly jarr with ſo great a hope? What manner of perſons ſhould theſe be that are perſwaded within a little theſe heavens muſt paſs away as a ſcroll, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth be burnt up? I think if this will not preſs home on men to be ſerious and diligent they muſt be in a very ſad lethargie.

V. *The accompliſhment of Scripture is a moſt clear and undeniable witneſs of it's divinity*, that it is his Word who is not like man to lye or the ſon of man to repent, and hath this as its diſtinguiſhing character, that not one ſyllable thereof falls to the ground: This is the undoubted privilege of God, and of him alone, to fore-ſee things contingent which are many ages after to fall out, and hath no dependance upon neceſſary and natural cauſes; and truly this may be a convincing argument, yea, we may ſay of all external teſtimonies is the greateſt; but it's ſtrange to think what a generation there is who can ſport at the Scripture and queſtion the truth thereof, who yet did never once ſeriouſly enquire if ſuch a thing be true, elſe ſo clear a witneſs might ſtare them in the face, ſuch a party we ſhould look on with compaſſion; it's alſo ſad to think at how poor a rate, far below their allowance, many of the Saints do here live, becauſe there is ſo little of that excellent and more noble Spirit, to ſearch the Scripture for their further comfort and eſtabliſhment thereby.

It is true this bleſſed record doth bear witneſs to it ſelf, and is known by its own light whereon there is ſuch a viſible impreſs of the glorious God, ſuch convincing marks of its true deſcent as may thoroughly ſhew whoſe it is, and how far it exceeds all human invention; and thus by a clear manifeſtation of the truth, doth commend itſelf to men's conſciences as a ſafe ground whereon they may repoſe their Soul: It is alſo clear, how wonderfully the Scripture hath been preſerved, and the original copies thereof kept through all ages, that whatever ſmall variation there may appear as to ſome *Apiculi*, which in ſome places hath cauſed divers readings, yet, in any neceſſary or ſaving truth the greateſt criticks will confeſs they do not in the leaſt vary; and it is known (wherein we are to adore that ſpecial providence of God) that the Jewiſh Church, to whom this ſacred *depoſitum* was delivered,

vered, did with ſuch exact and ſingular care look to the ſame, even in the leaſt tittle or letter thereof, this being the great work and ſtudy of the Mazorites from one age to another, to ſee to the preſerving of that great record from being in the leaſt vitiate or corrupt; and the greateſt adverſaries of the truth cannot poſſibly deny that agreement betwixt theſe many original copies in the whole ſubſtance, which may be very convincing to the World. And do not men ſee how marvellous the whole frame of the Scripture is? What a correſpondency betwixt all the parts thereof that nothing in it doth in the leaſt vitiate the proportion and beauty of the work, but all alongſt an evident tendency to advance holineſs and conform the ſoul to God: With a wonderful conſent and harmony in anſwering to this great end, we ſee the ſimplicity and plainneſs of its ſtyle, yet back'd with a convincing Majeſty and authority upon the conſcience; yea beſides it hath been atteſted by miracles that were great in themſelves, famous in their time, tranſmitted to the Church in after ages, with unanſwerable evidences of their truth, that not only the witneſs of the Word, but other preſſing and rational grounds may let us ſee there could be no deceit or impoſture therein.

Theſe are a great teſtimony to the truth, but I may ſay, on very ſure ground, that next to that great witneſs of that Spirit, there is no argument more convincing to reach Atheiſm a ſtroke and thoroughly ſatisfy an exerciſed ſpirit who may be plunged about this great thing, the authority of the Scripture, than a clear diſcovery of its performance whilſt under the aſſault of ſuch a temptation; if this be the very word of God they may but retire within, and then turn their eyes abroad in the world to ſee what a viſible impreſs of the Word is ſtamped on every piece of the work and providence of God. Now for further clearing I would offer theſe few things.

1. Firſt the accompliſhment of the Scripture is a very publick teſtimony from Heaven to its divinity, whilſt the Lord by his works through the earth which are done in the view of Angels and Men doth ſolemnly avow that this is his word, for we muſt ſay his work within on the hearts of his people, and without about the Church is ſuch, whereat men, yea all the magicians of the earth may ſtand amazed, and confeſs that nothing leſs than a divine almighty power can accompliſh the ſame.

2. This gives in the witneſs of all the generation of the righteous, who from the beginning have proven the truth thereof, yea, ſealed by the blood of many excellent Chriſtians, ſome of whom though they could not well diſpute for it, yet had ſo ſtrong a demonſtration of the truth within, as made it an eaſy work to dye for the ſame.

3. This doth clearly ſhew the Scripture is an unchangeable rule of righteouſneſs, that alters not but takes place in all ages, whence ſuch as are wiſe to bring providence in to the word and compare the experience and remarks of one time with another, may have a great reach and be thus led in a ſure path as to the foreſeeing of events.

4. This alſo doth demonſtrate that it is his Word who doth rule and guide the World, and hath a ſovereign dominion over the ſame, whilſt we may here ſee ſuch remarkable events, which both in the preſent and in former times have fallen out, as may ſhew a power that can reach the greateſt with a ſtroke, ſhake the moſt eſtabliſhed kingdoms and even over the belly of inſuperable difficulties accompliſh the Word, yea, that ſurely the Spirit of the wheels that moves them, is from him whoſe word this is; for it is not more clear that theſe curtains of the heavens are ſtretch'd forth over the earth, than that the Scripture is ſtretch'd out over the whole work and frame of providence,

vidence, ſo as all the motions and ſteps thereof, even of the moſt caſual things that fall out hath a viſible tendency to accompliſh theſe ends which the Scripture hath held forth.

5. This clearly ſheweth, it muſt be his word who hath foreſeen all things that were to befall the Church, and the various changes and adventures of every Chriſtian's life through time, whilſt it is ſo wonderfully ſhaped and ſuited to every new tryal of the Church, as if intended only for that time and to every caſe of a godly man, as though it had been alone writ for them.

6. This alſo ſheweth, that he who is the author of the Scripture, and hath framed that admirable piece, muſt have ſome immediate correſpondence with the Spirit of man, knoweth our ſitting down and riſing up, yea, doth ſearch the heart and the reins; for experience can tell how the Word is directed to the heart, doth reach the moſt inward contrivances thereof, doth ſo clearly reveal and open up a Chriſtian to himſelf, that we may ſay of a truth, he is the God of the Spirits of all fleſh, and one greater than our heart whoſe it is.

7. I ſhall further add, the fulfilling of the Scripture in the experience of the Saints doth ſhew it is not a dead letter, but hath power and life; and there muſt be an enlightning, quickning Spirit, that ſurely goeth along with the ſame; this clearly demonſtrates ſomething above words, yea, above nature in the written word, that can make ſuch a change upon the ſoul, give life to the dead, open the eyes of the blind, yea, can turn a lump of earth that formerly tended downward, now, without any violence, to move from a principle of life towards God as the ſparks flee upward.

VI. *The accompliſhment of the Scripture is a moſt pleaſant and truly delectable ſubject,* worthy of our ſerious thoughts and ſtudy; for here is held forth the higheſt truth for the judgment to contemplate, the truth and faithfulneſs of God in the Word, and here is alſo the greateſt good for the affections to embrace and delight in, as that wherein our whole happineſs is certainly wrapt up; it is undeniable that it is the godly man, who knoweth beſt what true and ſolid pleaſure is; which he doth not loſe by turning his heart from the creature to God, but maketh a bleſſed exchange; O how far doth the joy and delights of the ſoul exceed thoſe of the ſenſes! and the delight of a Chriſtian how far doth it ſurpaſs that of a natural man, even in his beſt eſtate! and ſure this precious ſtudy of the daily performance of the Word, is one of thoſe paths of pleaſure which would bring in more ſolid joy to the ſpirit in ſome few hours, than in ſome years wallowing in the carnal delights of the fleſh, which is but as pleaſure in ſport, but quickly turneth to grief in earneſt; it is one of the great miſtakes of the World, that religion tends ſo much to grieve and diſquiet the ſoul, nay, it is certainly the want of this, becauſe we are ſo little truly religious, when we ſcruffe over our duty, and take but a paſſing look of the ways and work of God in the World, then it is indeed very affrighting and unpleaſant; but when in a more Chriſtian way we do ſeriouſly look thereupon and get our heart near God, taking the Word alongſt with us, O how delightful and raviſhing a ſight will this be! I truly think though there were not a command, though it were no duty, nor ſuch advantage in the ſtudy of this grave truth, yet that joy and refreſhment which the ſoul would find in ſuch a diligent ſearch in going down into this bleſſed deep, ſhould invite us thereto.

But when I ſpeak of this, what a ſweet and delightful ſubject the performance and fulfilling of the Scripture is; it muſt be underſtood, that it is ſo only to the ſaints; and it is no wonder the World keep at a diſtance from it, for this is a truth they cannot bear, they hate it, which, as *Micajah*, doth

prophecy always hard things, and carrieth a meſſage of death to them, which doth foretell their approaching ruin, and ſhould cauſe them all to tremble; the knowledge whereof muſt encreaſe their ſorrow and diſquietneſs, yea, cauſe them to cry out, O, do not torment us before the time! for they are ſurely undone and ruined, if the Scripture of God be true and hath a performance; but O, what pleaſant and refreſhful tidings doth this carry to a Chriſtian! What a ſweet view doth he here get of the inheritance and bleſſed eſtate of the ſaints, which may cauſe ſuch an exclamation, *how great is that goodneſs which is laid up for theſe that fear thee!*

To demonſtrate this, I ſhall hold forth ſome things, from which we may ſee how delightful a ſubject the accompliſhment of the Scripture is for a Chriſtian to ſtudy.

1. Serious converſe with this grave truth leadeth forward to practice, and thus helpeth to bring down theory to experience, which is the moſt ſweet and deſirable of all other demonſtrations that we can have of the truth of the Scripture, and maketh our light clear and pleaſant to the taſte; turning the exerciſe of our judgment and reaſon thereanent into ſenſe and feeling; we are then made to ſee what a difference there is, betwixt that diſcovery which a ſpiritual man (whoſe religion is his practice) hath of this, and the cold winter-light of natural underſtanding that hath no heat or warmneſs therewith, which is as great a difference, as betwixt hearing of ſuch a thing by report, and ſeeing it with our eyes.

2. This bleſſed ſtudy how the Scripture hath a certain accompliſhment, would help to read the word with another kind of pleaſure. O, what repreſentation ſhould then the truths and promiſes thereof have to the godly man! It would be as one going in to look over his charters, and the great things therein contained, which he doth not in the leaſt debate or queſtion, ſince they are paſt the ſeals and fully ratified, and now conſidereth all which is promiſed as his own, which he look'd in former times upon but as a common thing, whilſt he made not earneſt of the certainty thereof, and what an intereſt he had in the ſame; O, when he readeth that promiſe of a new heaven and earth, and that glorious eſtate which abideth the Saints! He cannot turn his eyes and thoughts ſo eaſily off it, but is made to ſtand and wonder that ſo great a thing that will make ſuch a marvellous change in his condition is even ſhortly to come to paſs; how ſweet and pleaſant is it for ſuch to turn over theſe promiſes, who can ſet to his ſeal and bear this witneſs, that he hath really proven the truth thereof by ſure experience; as he knoweth he hath a real being. Surely the Bible is another thing to theſe, than it is to the great part of men who only make it the ſubject of their contemplation.

3. In this bleſſed ſtudy we ſhould have much ready to our hand to obſerve and our obſervation made ſweet and pleaſant to us; for there we might ſee how all the paths of the Lord towards his people are mercy and truth, this would give you a refreſhful diary of providence, how in ſuch a plunging ſtrait we found the Word ſenſibly ſealed; what obſervable confirmations we have had therewith at ſuch a time and in ſuch a condition, the after re-counting of which in an hour of tryal or in the evening of our life, would exceed theſe greateſt pleaſures the men of this age can have in looking over their gold and greateſt treaſures, which for many years they have been laying up.

4. In the ſerious ſtudy of the daily accompliſhing of the Scripture, we ſhould have a moſt ſatisfying view and proſpect of what God is doing up and down the earth, what purpoſes and deſigns he hath on foot; and how things here beneath do work together for carrying on of the ſame, we ſhould ſee what

what an excellent and curious piece of work this frame of providence is, which the more it is conſidered, it will be the more a wonder, how perfect in all its various colours, what an obſervable concurrence there is there, how ſeveral diſcords, which we ſee here, do yet agree with one conſent for the compleating of God's deſign, which is ſtill going on, and whilſt we think there muſt be ſome diſorder amongſt the wheels, we are made after to ſee that this confuſion was an excellent ſtep of providence confounding the wiſdom of men, every part of his way being ſo knit to one another, as diſcovers to ſuch, who make this bleſſed truth their ſerious ſtudy, a moſt rare contexture beyond the reach and underſtanding of the greateſt artiſts that ever were. Here alſo we might go up that watch-tower of Chriſtian obſervation, and from thence take a grave look of God's way, and lay his work in the World to the Scripture, as the meaſuring line, (where we ſhould ſee and find the ſight thereof very pleaſant) how the Word every day takes place, doth iſſue through all the veins and arteries of providence, each line whereof is ſo exactly drawn, as by a pencil in ſome skilful hand, to that great exemplar of the Scripture; here we might diſcern theſe eminent examples of judgment and mercy that in every age are ſet before us, how wicked men proſper for a time, yet have a dreadful iſſue and are ſuddenly caſt into deſtruction; they ſpread as a green bay-tree, and within a little their place cannot be found, how the godly are oft ſore afflicted, yet flouriſhing as the palm-tree, and the more they are depreſſed the more they grow; how the enemies of the Church are oft lifted up for a ſorer fall, and the Church brought low, in order to her greater enlargement; how judgment findeth out ſinners, and is oft exactly proportioned in meaſure and kind to the ſin, and on the other hand how integrity is oft ſore toſſed, yet falleth upon its feet, and overclouded, that it may ſhine more brightly after; how the threatnings of the Word do viſibly overtake kingdoms and nations, bring down great houſes, cauſeth thoſe brought up in ſcarlet to embrace the dunghil, and letteth not the hoary head of cruel and wicked men go oft into the grave in peace; and again how the Lord forſaketh not his people but ſheweth reſpect to their way, the good man walketh in his integrity, and his ſeed after him is bleſſed. O, how ſweet an exerciſe were this for a Chriſtian even to loſe himſelf in!

5. From thence we might in a great meaſure diſcern what of the night it is with the Church; if there be any evidences that it is near day, and what ſuch a ſinful caſe doth threaten, we ſhould be skilful to feel the Church's pulſe, and thereby find what ſymptoms there are of life and death, and perceive a dark cloud of judgment caſting up, when it is but like an handbreadth; ſurely this ſtudy ſhould make us wiſe to know the times, and what we ought to do therein; for amongſt theſe various events which fall out in every age, the Lord's way is conſtant with it ſelf and with his truth, if we be right obſervers.

6. Here we ſhould have a moſt pleaſant and clear view how the Scripture of God comprehendeth the whole ſtate of the Church, from the beginning to the end of time; that it is a moſt full and perfect regiſter of all the viciſſitudes and alterations which ſhe is to meet with whilſt in a militant condition; and doth alſo moſt exactly point out theſe occurrences and remarkable events which fall out in the ordinary way and courſe of providence, that we may read them as evidently in the Word, as we ſee them with our eyes fall out in the World; for in following this ſtudy we ſhould clearly ſee how the Scripture bringeth the Church to light, out of the Womb of an eternal decree, and doth trace it from the firſt promulgation of the Goſpel after the fall through theſe dark times before the flood, whilſt it was but in families,

families, and through that long trial in Egypt, and all its ſettled and flouriſhing condition in Canaan, and carrieth her forward through all the ſeveral changes of her caſe, under her following decay and in the times of the captivity, even to the manifeſtation of Chriſt and dawning of the goſpel; and as it thus taketh in, within its reach, the whole eſtate, and the ſpecial events which did befall the Church under the Law; ſo we may ſee how the Scripture alſo followeth the Church through the whole time of the goſpel, and bringeth her as a grain of muſtard ſeed from a day of ſmall things until it bring her to perfection, taketh her as it were by the hand from her infancy, and goeth with her through all the turnings of her condition; through that long and dark night of antichriſt's reign, pointeth clearly out her condition and various aſſaults that ſhe ſhould endure in that time, and that bleſſed victory which ſhe ſhould after have, though not all at once but gradually, over her enemies, and that the word and the Church do never part, but one walketh ſtep for ſtep with the other until it bring her ſafe to land, and as it were deliver her off its hand and guard, at the coming of Chriſt.

7. This would alſo help us up to ſweet thoughts, and give us matter of a ſong in the ſaddeſt night of the Churches condition, when we ſee how God's great deſign in the World is the accompliſhing of the Scripture, and know that his ends which he hath held forth therein, cannot be fruſtrate, it would ſerve to ſilence all our complaints with wondering at God's way, and triumphing in the works of his hands; we ſhould not then be afraid of evil tidings; a ſtormy time would not outwit us; being perſwaded that though the earth ſhould be overturned it ſhall ſurely be well with the righteous, the Church muſt flouriſh and all her enemies be found liars, becauſe he is faithful that hath promiſed, whoſe Word will as ſurely come to paſs as the ſun doth return after a dark night.

VII. *It doth now more ſpecially concern the godly in theſe latter times, to ſtudy this great truth of the accompliſhment of the Scripture*, and ſet about a ſerious enquiry and ſearch therein as a truth that ſhall yet be in a further meaſure diſcovered and opened up, the nearer the Church is to the end of time, which may thus appear.

1. Herein is the Word expreſs, that one part of the Scripture, which from former ages was ſealed up, ſhould in the latter days be clear and eaſy to underſtand, *Dan. laſt chap. ver.* 4. 9. The ſeal is there put on; but go thy way *Daniel*, for theſe Words are cloſed and ſealed to the time of the end, but *Rev. laſt chap. and ver.* 9. We have that bar taken off; ſeal not the ſayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand; becauſe then the time did draw near, to which a more full diſcovery and opening up of the Scripture was reſerved, and a more large manifeſtation of the ſpirit beyond former ages. Now by the laſt days we are not only to underſtand the whole time of the goſpel, though it is thus termed in the Scripture; but the latter part of theſe laſt times; which is more eſpecially pointed at, even the cloſe and evening of time, that laſt Epocha and period of prophetick chronology, to which a great accompliſhment of Scripture prophecies is reſerved.

2. This alſo is expreſly promiſed, that in the latter days the Church ſhall have a more full diſcovery of this truth, how the Scripture is verified, *Dan. laſt chap. v.* 4. *many ſhall run to and fro, and knowledge ſhall be increaſed*, which increaſe as it clearly pointeth at the laſt times, and that bright day the Church ſhall have, when *Iſrael* ſhall be brought in to Chriſt; it doth alſo point at and promiſe ſome greater light, and a more full manifeſting of the myſteries of the Word and fulfilling thereof; for the former part of the chapter

chapter ſheweth, that increaſe of knowledge doth relate to theſe things which were before ſealed; we wait and believe the further accompliſhment of this promiſe to the Church beyond all we have yet ſeen, that many Scripture truths now dark and abſtruſe, ſhall be made ſo clear as ſhall even cauſe us to wonder at the groſs miſtakes we once had thereof, yea, that after generations ſhall have a diſcovery and underſtanding of ſome prophecies now obſcure, which ſhall as far exceed us, as this time doth go beyond former ages, which comparatively we muſt ſay were very dark, O! when that promiſe of the incalling of the Jews ſhall once take place, what a wonder will they be to themſelves that their underſtanding ſhould have been under ſuch a vail when the truth ſhall be clear and evident to them in that day? Will it not be a ſweet and eaſy Work for the Godly to match together the predictions of the Word and events? And truly there is much now wrapt up in Scripture Prophecies, not yet fulfilled, which we may ſay, in after times when the events ſhall unvail their meaning, will exceed, yea confound all theſe comments many have had upon them.

3. Is it not alſo clear, that theſe prophecies which of all the Scripture were moſt obſcure and overclouded with dark figures and allegories, concerning which there had been ſuch miſtake and heſitation by the Church, ſo many perplexing queries have a peculiar reſpect to the laſt times? And that then they ſhall be made plain and eaſy, when ſo notable a key as the event doth open them up, ſuch of theſe of the witneſſes taking life and riſing again, Babylon's fall and ruin, Chriſt's reigning with his Saints a thouſand years, which now are in ſome meaſure already cleared, from their begun accompliſhment beyond former times, but we wait for a more full commentary, that time ſhall give upon the ſame.

4. It is in the latter times that the glory of God in his truth and faithfulneſs ſhall moſt eminently ſhine forth, that is a part of the ſolemn congratulation of the Church upon Babylon's fall, *Revelat.* xv. *v.* 3. not only *great and marvelous are thy works*, but *juſt and true are thy ways*, for truly in this ſtroke of the judgment of God, and theſe remarkable providences concurring therewith, the fulfilling of the Scripture will be ſo plain and undenyable, that we may ſay it will then dazzle the eyes of men, even the greateſt Atheiſts, alarm the World, yea very effectually contribute (we have ground ſo to judge) to that promiſed increaſe of the Church and incoming of the Jews, when in Antichriſt's fall and ruin, they ſhall ſee ſo convincing a ſeal put to one of the moſt conſiderable prophecies of the Word, in the accompliſhment whereof much of the prophetick part of the New Teſtament relating to the Church's ſtate, and her long trial under Antichriſt's reign may be ſeen clealy verified.

5. The Lord hath reſerved his greateſt Works to the latter days, wherein his judgments ſhall be manifeſt, and the Word confirmed by ſuch ſolemn convincing providences, that men will not get them paſſed without a remark; we are this day witneſſes to many ſuch, aud are looking what theſe times ſhall yet bring forth, that the great and remarkable acts of the Lord muſt force the World to ſee a divine power, and ſay, lo there is an undoubted accompliſhment of the Scripture.

6. The Church in theſe laſt times hath peculiar advantages for underſtanding this truth of the Scripture's accompliſhment, which former ages had not. Firſt a great part thereof is now fulfilled that men may ſee with their eyes, if they but know how to lay the Word and work of God together, the chriſtian Church had in former times but dark glances at theſe great things, which we have this day viſibly tranſcribed in providence; the promiſes were

then traveling in birth of that which is now brought forth. 2. Are we not mounted as it were on the ſhoulders of that experience and obſervation of former times? which hath been tranſmitted to us, and we muſt ſay upon that account, the Church hath now a greater ſeal and confirmation of the truth, than what it had in the days of the Prophets and the Apoſtles, even when Chriſt was in the fleſh. 3. The Temple of God and Ark of his Teſtament is now opened in heaven, light more fully abounding and the means of knowledge; And, O! ſhould not this be much our ſtudy, who have a greater talent than former ages! certainly this will be a ſin of a deeper dye, than in times of ignorance, ſince we can be no ſtrangers to this truth without ſhutting our eyes, blinding the conſcience, doing violence to our light, when the Lord doth give his People ſuch ſolemn confirmations.

7. I ſhall add, is it not clearly foretold in that *Dan.* xii. *v.* 4. that in the laſt times this will be one of the ſpecial exerciſes of the ſaints to enquire and make a diligent ſearch concerning the Scripture's accompliſhment? For it's there ſaid, many ſhall run to and fro and knowledge ſhall be increaſed, importing that this ſhall be much their ſtudy, and cauſe a diligent ſearch whereunto the great works of God in theſe times ſhall invite them: and what ſhould be the poſture of the Godly in theſe days (on whom the end of the world is come) ſhould it not be like the watchman in the laſt watch of the night, who looketh oft what appearance there is from the eaſt of the day breaking? a ſerious enquiry what of the Scripture is fulfilled, whereby we may know on very clear grounds if the night be far ſpent, the day at hand, and that the coming of the Lord to judgement draweth near.

VIII. *This is a great and concerning duty; for Chriſtians to ſtudy this truth, that they may have ſomething more than report, how the Scripture hath a ſure accompliſhment*, and doth take place in the providences of the time wherein we live. I muſt think ſtrange that there is ſuch a great help as this ſo near, and yet we ſee it not, nor do ſeriouſly ponder the ſame, when the command is ſo expreſs to obſerve the works of the Lord, which for that end are ſhewed forth, that men may enquire and read the faithfulneſs of God therein, yea, that ſo great a truth which would indure the ſearch of all the criticks of the World, a truth wherein our bleſſedneſs through time and eternity lieth, ſhould offer it ſelf to our trial, and yet is ſo little known; O, who can diſpenſe with the neglect of this duty? by which we anſwer that ſolemn call and invitation of the works of God, do honour him, ſerve our generation, are helpers to our own faith, and are thereby helped to ſtrengthen others, yea are brought to ſee with our eyes, and from experience what before was as a ſtrange thing unto us.

Now to clear how much this is a Chriſtian's duty, to ſtudy a practical converſe with the Word, and to be ſerious obſervers of its accompliſhment, let us conſider.

1. We are thus helped to declare the works of the Lord and give him the glory of his faithfulneſs; and is not that a grave duty? Which at all times in every ſtation and condition of life ſhould engage men to this ſtudy; thus every Chriſtian may become a witneſs to the truth and put his ſeal thereto, for which he ſhould think his life truly deſirable, and doth in no ſmall meaſure attain the true end thereof, though he had no other opportunity for his maſter's ſervice; we may ſay, this truth of the Scripture's accompliſhment like a great roll, hath been tranſmitted from hand to hand, from one age to another, atteſted as it were ſubſcribed by ſo many witneſſes, it doth thus come to our time, and to every man's door and require their perſonal witneſſing and ſealing of the ſame.

2. This

2. This ſhould make it an eaſy work to truſt the Word, and to adventure thereon in the ordinary occurrences of their life, they may well truſt God in a ſtrait, who have ſo ſtrong an argument to make uſe of, that oft they have tried him and the truth of his Word by many, many experiences; will not theſe that know his name truſt in him? Which was a notable teſtimony from a ſerious Chriſtian in a very ſharp trial; oft have I tried God, and ſhall I not learn to truſt him once?

3. This doth lay the Chriſtian in the way of that promiſe. *Pſal.* 107. *laſt ver.* a promiſe truly large and comprehenſive, but little conſidered, that *ſuch as are wiſe to obſerve the works of God, they ſhall ſee the loving kindneſs of the Lord,* even in their own particular caſe made out to them, yea whilſt they are ſerious to obſerve his works abroad in the World, and his ways to others they ſhall be no loſers thereby at home; but find this promiſe meet them and turn their general obſervation under perſonal experience of the loving kindneſs of the Lord.

4. Thus the ſaints by experiencing the truth of the Word get a convincing ſeal thereby to their intereſt in the promiſe; for begun poſſeſſion is indeed a ſtrong witneſs to this right, when they can ſay they have got as certain returns of the Word which they have put to an eſſay in ſome particulars of their life, as they are ſure of any thing they did ever ſee, ſo that from unqueſtionable experience they may ſet up a pillar, and write thereon *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*

5. Thus ſhould Chriſtians with much advantage be helped to convince gainſayers; for it's ſure, Atheiſm could not make ſo bold and publick an appearance if men did not ſo much take their religion on truſt, O the ſerious experienced man, can with another confidence own the truth, whoſe experience and obſervation of the works of God give him an argument that none can anſwer, while not only he can aſſert but conduct and lead man to the things themſelves, that they may ſee if in ſuch and ſuch particulars, the Scripture be not fulfilled.

6. Thus the providence of God ſhould have a more ſweet refreſhing countenance, when from this great height the watchtower of Chriſtian obſervation we take a look thereof, and truly otherways, men will ſtumble at the moſt ordinary diſpenſations, and think God's work is a maſs of confuſion, but here we are taught to ſee how the written Word and his way are linked in a moſt ſweet agreement.

7. We may thus trace divine truth, even by our ſenſe and feeling, and join the Word and experience in a regular correſpondence; yea thus we ſhould have a clear tranſcript of the Lord's way with his Church taken out of that great authentick original of the Scripture; and there ſee on what a ſolid baſis and foundation that magnificent ſtructure of providence is raiſed up, what a noble key ſhould we thus have for opening the Scripture, by a ſerious humble inquiry after the works of God? Where not only the impreſſion and ſign of the power, but of the truth and faithfulneſs of the Lord are ſo very legible.

8. This is a piece of our talent wherewith we are entruſted, of which every Chriſtian ſhould ſtudy a ſerious improvement, knowing they muſt render an account what their obſervation of this great truth hath gained and what further eſtabliſhment and confirmation they have thus attained.

9. I would add, the concernment and weight of this ſtudy may preſs it much on us; for if the Scripture's accompliſhment be an undoubted truth, O! then this is ſure the Saints have a great inheritance; they are Princes though now under a diſguiſe, and though yet minors, they are heirs of more than

than the World can ſhadow forth; the Chriſtian is then more happy on a dunghil ſcraping his ſore, than ſuch who are cloathed in purple and fare decately every day; if this be ſure we ſhould look with compaſſion, rather than envy, on thoſe whom the World doth account happy; we need not queſtion the gain of godlineſs, then it is ſure, that ſuch as ſow in tears ſhall reap in joy, and the righteous, though now trampled under, in the morning ſhall have dominion; yea, in a word, we may then on ſure ground ſolace our ſelves with the thought of that great change, which will be within a little time, when the grave muſt render back her Priſoners, and may with as much aſſurance of a bleſſed reſurrection lie down in the duſt, as we are ſure there will be a morning when we lye down at night. O! then there is a heaven and a hell, that is certain, eternity is a night dream, and one moment ſhall ſhortly put an end to all our ſervices, yea, the ſhutting of our eye-lids at death, ſhall but open them in the Paradiſe of God.

HAving touched this truth a little in the general, I ſhall now propound ſome Arguments whence *the accompliſhment of the Scripture* may be demonſtrated; they are theſe five which I intend to proſecute in the following diſcourſe.

FIRST *Argument*, To prove the Scripture is certainly fulfilled and hath an accompliſhment is this; That which hath been in all ages the teſtimony of the Saints, what every particular Chriſtian doth ſeal from their frequent and ſure experience, what is found and proved by them in their daily walk upon exacteſt trial, yea, what as many as ever were ſerious in religion do witneſs muſt be certain and true.

But the accompliſhment of the Scripture is ſuch,

Therefore, &c.

II. *Argument*, That which is manifeſt and legible in the whole courſe and tenor of providence about the Church and by clear convincing inſtances both of judgment and mercy, is made out to the obſervation of every age, muſt be a certain truth, but the Scripture's *accompliſhment* is ſuch.

Therefore.

III. *Argument*, That which hath not only the Chriſtian's teſtimony from experience, and of the Church from conſtant obſervation, but is obvious even to the view of the World, which from the conſcience of the worſt of men, doth force a teſtimony that they can neither ſhift nor deny; which alſo may be demonſtrate to the conviction of ordinary obſervers, and hath a publick acknowledgement from the greateſt Atheiſts and mockers of religion in every age, muſt ſurely be a clear truth.

But, &c. Therefore.

IV. *Argument*, That which was to take place in ſuch and ſuch periods of time, and hath accordingly come to paſs, the event exactly anſwering to the prediction, yea, that whereof the great part is now fulfilled, and but a little at this day remaineth to be made out, muſt be a certain truth.

But the great part of the Scripture is thus already fulfilled, and but a little thereof now remaineth.

Therefore.

V. *Argument*, That which not only is for the moſt part already accompliſhed, but is a thing whereof we have ſuch ſure confirmations, yea, ſo great a pledge in our hand from the Lord, that what yet remains ſhall be certainly fulfilled, muſt it not be an undoubted truth? But the Scripture as to theſe ſpecial predictions, that are not yet made out, is ſuch concerning which the Lord hath given his people a very large pledge and ſtrong confirmations,

now

now in these latter-times, to believe their certain accomplishment. Therefore.

ARGUMENT FIRST.

THAT the Scripture of God contained in the old and new testament, wherein our great hope, and comfort doth lye, is certainly true, and hath a real accomplishment, may be thus demonstrated, *That it is tried, and proved in the godly mans experience, to which in all ages, yea, from innumerable proofs the saints have put to their seal, that this is a sure and faithful testimony.*

Experience is indeed a strong demonstration, and it is such a witness as leaveth no room for debate, for here the truth is felt, proven, and acted on the heart, which the christian knoweth well, and is as sure of as he is perswaded that he liveth or that the sun when it shineth hath light, and warmness therewith, it is true the world liveth at a great distance with this, they only converse with the sound of such a thing, and we know the naked theory of scripture-truth hath but a short reach and that it differeth as far from that which a serious practical christian hath as the sight of a country in a map is from a real discovery of the same; where the difference is not in the degree, but in the kind: yet though this grave testimony of experience is a thing where too many (alace too many) are strangers, we must say so much thereof is obvious, as may force its authority on mens consciences, and shew there can be no fallacy, or delusion in this witness, if they but allow the use, and exercise of reason, seeing it is not the record of a few, at one time, or in one corner of the earth, but a solemn witness from the saints and followers of God, whose judgment and integrity, their adversaries must often confess, yea, of all the saints in every age through the whole universal church in parts of the earth most remote from other, and this, by most frequent renewed proofs hath found, and experienced the truth and real accomplishment of the word: and now if this be not sufficiently convincing, I would but add, *O! will you then come and see*, be but christians indeed, and then ye will no more debate that testimony; and truly it is a very poor shift, for men who have the scripture before them, which of it self doth witness its authority, and this backed with so solemn a seal from the Lord, by his works and providence, to debate the christians witness, from their experience, because they do not see this themselves, for what is the cause thereof, is it not their choice? that they do not follow on to know the same, the truth of God seeketh credit from no man upon trust, yea, craveth no more but that by a practical converse they would put it to a trial, and then it shall not decline their judgment.

Now to prosecute this argument a little, I shall point at some special scripture-truths, with which christians have most usual trade, and converse in their own case; and give in therewith, their testimony, how these are clearly proved and verifyed by most sure experience: it is not to be here understood, the giving a particular account with respect to persons, time, or other circumstances, how the word doth thus take place. I think it may be sufficiently convincing to instance in the general such clear uncontroverted experiences, which are well known to the godly, and have by them been oft proved amidst the various changes of their life (though not by all in the same measure but some suitable proportion to their different sizes, trials and wrestlings) which can witness that real correspondence which the word hath with the experience of the saints; and truly concerning these I may with some confidence assert, they are not naked, or airy notions, but such as can witness their truth to the serious experienced christian, whom on this account I dare attest.

I ſhall here inſtance. 5. Special truths of the word, which are much tryed, and proved in chriſtians experience. 1. That there is ſuch a contrariety betwixt the fleſh and the ſpirit, as the ſcripture holdeth forth. 2. The deceitfulneſs of mans heart. 3. That there is a ſpiritual, and inviſible adverſary, with whom we have war. 4. That the promiſes of the word have undoubted accompliſhment. 5. The truth alſo of the threatnings, I mean ſuch under whoſe reach the godly may fall.

1. *That there is contrariety betwixt the fleſh, and the ſpirit,* a Law in our members rebelling againſt the Law of our mind, is a truth very clearly proved to the chriſtian, whoſe experience though ſad doth undenyably verify, and confirm the ſcripture, *Gal.* v. 17. *Rom.* vii. xix. 23. this is a part of the word which holds forth mans nature in its true ſhape and form, whether their byaſs and inclination moſt eaſily turneth, yea, ſo marvelouſly anſwereth their experience, that to queſtion the ſame were to put it far beyond queſtion that they know nothing of a new nature or principle of grace within. For who ever made earneſt of religion but their firſt acquaintance with the peace of God, was the beginning of this war; it is then that the houſe divideth, and corruption ſetteth up a ſtandard, yea, no ſooner can any begin to be a chriſtian, but he muſt be a ſoldier alſo; and we may ſay none ever attained ſuch a meaſure of mortification, or was ſo old in the grace of God, as could priviledge them from the ſtirrings of the old man; and neceſſity of that complaint, *who ſhall deliver us from a body of death,* but whatever advantage ſome of the ſaints have above others, yet in this their experience can witneſs.

1. They now know two different parties within themſelves, that until once grace came they could not underſtand, which at the ſame time in the very ſame action do act oppoſitely one to the other, yea, that there is no ſpiritual duty, wherein the fleſh (though not always in ſuch a prevalent degree) doth not ſhew ſome active reſiſtance.

2. That all the ſtirrings, and motions of the fleſh have ſtill a tendency congruous to their own nature, to turn the heart carnal and to alienate it from God, ſo as it is eaſy to diſcern, how in theſe the riſe and the end do throughly correſpond.

3. That this is a cruel taskmaſter if once it bear ſway; imperious in its command, and violent in its purſuit, ſo that their experience may herein tell, its a ſore, and an intolerable thing for a ſervant to bear rule.

4. That to things moſt forbidden, the fleſh moveth moſt impetuouſly, ſo, as it will even break through the hedge, though ſure thereby to be ſcratch'd with thorns, yea, it is oft ſo eager in its purſuit, that it will follow the bait, while the hook is moſt diſcernible.

5. That when once this doth ſwell, and wax fat, they may upon another intereſt cry, *woe's us, our leaneſs,* for like the ſcales of the ballance, they find a proportionable abatement and depreſſing of their ſpiritual life, as the fleſh goeth up, yea, they have cauſe to know how every ſtep of their heart going forth to the world is a ſtep that doth put them further off from God.

6. That the more cloſely the Law is preſt in its ſpiritual extent, yea, the more ſpiritual a duty is, the more fully oppoſite they find their carnal heart, and though the fleſh may bear up a little with the form of Religion, and hath more complacency with that way, which lieth moſt in externals, yet it cannot endure the power thereof, it can ſuffer men to be hypocrites but not truly chriſtians.

7. To reſtrain, and bring this under bondage they find that it doth put the ſpirit ſo much at liberty, which getting looſe reins for a little will leave the ſoul

ſoul work for many days, and with ſad after groans pay back an hours pleaſure, yea, they alſo know, when the outward man is low, and upon a ſenſible decay, it hath not then hindered but rather effectually helped their inward joy and ſtrength.

8. That indulgence to the fleſh cauſeth a ſenſible thick interpoſition between heaven and the ſoul, whence they are ſo clogged and hampered in their flight and motion toward God, yea, thus have often their choiceſt duties been made a ſore and grievous task.

9. That this is the true riſe of their uſual perturbations, and doth ſtill put ſome jar betwixt them, and their lot, and doth hinder a ſatisfyed enjoying of that which they have, through murmuring at that they want, yea, they know, that to pleaſe the fleſh hath been oft the cauſe of their greateſt grief and diſpleaſure.

10. They alſo find how the defilement of their ſpirit, doth help to darken it, which overgrown with the fleſh, can have no clear diſcovery of ſpiritual things, but the more ſeparate from the body, and purged from theſe groſs dregs, they find themſelves at a further advantage to converſe with divine truths, which thus they get diſcovered beyond all that nature can reach.

II. *That the heart of man is deceitful, and deſperately evil,* Jer. xvii. 9. Jer. iv. 14. Prov. iv. 23. *Is a Scripture truth, whereto the Chriſtians experience* doth anſwer, as the face anſwereth to its ſelf in the glaſs, yea we may ſay it is ſo clearly demonſtrated to theſe who were ever ſerious about their inward caſe, that while they thus read the word in themſelves and are made to read themſelves in the word, they may with wonder acknowledge, that he, who can ſound this great deep of the heart, and draw ſo vive a portraiture thereof, is ſurely one before whom all things are manifeſt; who doth ſearch, and try the reins, and know what is our mould, and faſhion; this is one of the very firſt leſſons which practical religion doth teach, and the more nearneſs with God, and further meaſure of grace, that is attain'd, the more clear diſcovery there will be of this; O! what ſad hours, what bitter complaints, hath it cauſed? this oft doth obſtruct the chriſtians feaſt, and mingle their wine with gall and wormwood; I am ſure if that excellent company of the ſaints, who have been from the beginning to this day could be brought together, to give in their ſuffrage, and witneſs concerning the deceitfulneſs of the heart there would be one joint teſtimony to this truth; we ſhould find that *Enoch* who walk'd with God, *Moſes* with whom he ſpake face to face, that beloved ſervant, who leaned in Chriſt's boſom, and he who was caught up to the third heavens were no ſtrangers thereto, but could witneſs thus.

1. That it is within which aileth them moſt, and their greateſt adverſaries are men of their own houſe, yea, that in the worſt of times, there is ſtill more cauſe to complain of an evil heart, than of an evil and corrupt world, there being no worſe company, than they are oft to themſelves.

2. That no time of their life, but might give them, ſome further proof, that they are fools who truſt their own heart, which oft will eſcape and overreach their quickeſt reflection, even when both their eyes are on it; yea, that there is no time that alloweth the putting off their armour, or to diſmiſs their guard, not the beſt caſe, the greateſt eſtabliſhment in grace, nor the evening of the day, though they were within ſome minutes of the crown, and compleat victory, doth priviledge them from the experience of a deceitful heart.

3. That under the beſt frame they find, there will often lurk that which aftertime doth diſcover that for the preſent though it had been told, they could not have believed, until frequent experience maketh them ſee that the word knew their heart better than themſelves.

4. That

4. That to bring home their heart when once it goeth abroad, or recal the liberty they have given it, is not eaſy, which doth no ſooner parley with a temptation at a diſtance, adventure to ſport therewith, but it quickly turneth to earneſt, and is ready to yield.

5. They know the conſtant need to have a watch upon their ſenſes, and to make a covenant with their eyes, which do quickly betray their heart; ſo eaſy it is to be deceived, yea, to grow warm, catch fire upon the ſmalleſt touch.

6. How quickly alſo their ſpirit doth ſlacken, and looſe its keeneſs even in the greateſt advantage of their caſe, their experience can tell, that when in ſome meaſure they have been raiſed up in any ſpiritual enjoyment, they were then in hazard to be lift up to the wind, and to have their ſubſtance diſſolved in the more ſolid part of chriſtianity.

7. What a ſight have they ſometime of themſelves, ſuch as would be a terrour to them, if the heart and motions thereof could be writ out to the view of others, or that any were witneſſes to that which in one room will dwell beſide the grace of God as its door-neighbour.

8. In a word, their experience doth witneſs, how ſoon the ſtrongeſt reſolutions will evaniſh, that they are not oft in the evening, what they were in the morning, nor for many hours do they keep the ground they had attained, but *Reubens* character unſtable as water, may be ſtill their complaint, yea, I am ſure as many as ever obtained mercy to know themſelves, can tell that its paſt all reckoning, how oft their heart hath deceived them, when they truſted it moſt: This every day may cauſe them ſit down, and admire the grace of God, which can mend, what they ſo oft marre, and is ſtronger to ſave and preſerve than they are to deſtroy.

III. That as there is a body of death within, they alſo know there is, *An adverſary without*, *Eph.* vi. 12. 1 *Pet.* v. 8. *Joh.* viii. 44. whoſe way, and devices, and method of tempting doth moſt exactly anſwer the diſcovery of the word; this is indeed a truth, which chriſtian experience in all ages doth witneſs, that no ſooner they had a ſerious look after God, but found themſelves purſued by an inviſible party whoſe approaches though ſpiritual, are yet certain, and moſt ſenſibly demonſtrated, beſide that which the word doth clearly teach; yet it is ſure none of the ſaints were ever priviledged from ſuch experiences, for herein doth the chriſtians warfare ly, but O how ſweet may the evening be while they ſit down, and can ſing that ſong, *Our ſoul hath eſcaped as a bird from the fowler.* I ſhall here give in ſomething of the godly mans experience, which can bear witneſs to this.

1. That there is ſurely another party than the world, or themſelves, with which they have to do, an inviſible adverſary without, whom they perceive by that ſenſible correſpondence he keepeth with their heart within, by theſe violent inroads, importunate ſolicitations, theſe impetuos motions, wherewith they are ſo ſtrangely hurried, and oft driven over light and judgment, yea, over their ſtrongeſt reſolutions, ſo as he may be as diſcernible to them, and that there is ſomething therein beſide themſelves, as if they converſed with him in an outward viſible ſhape.

2. That ſince the time when they began to look after God, and to know any thing of his work upon their ſpirits they have been acquainted with moſt affrighting, dreadful temptations, and do now perceive his rage, and violent purſuit to bring them back, which they knew not before, when at peace with their idols and ſinful way.

3. That the mark he levelleth at, to which his uſual temptations have a tendency, is their ſoul, and inward man, to hinder communion with God, and to turn their heart off from him, to break the Law, and lay aſide commanded duties.

4. That

4. That his ordinary approaches to the heart are oft by a very ſmall thing, he needs no more but an open door, or a ſinful look for the diſpatch of a temptation, and knoweth by a wound in the eye, how to carry death in to the ſoul.

5. That he is ſuch a party as knoweth his time and opportunity, can change his weapons, and buſk the kook with divers baits, and yet he is always at hand, when the heart is lifted up, when they are out of their duty, and in a a carnal frame, to put in then with ſome temptation, and fiſh in ſuch muddy water.

6. That his way doth truly anſwer his name, *ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places*, this being ſo diſcerned by daily experience that he hath the advantage of the ground, is a moſt ſubtil obſerving adverſary, who lieth in the dark to us, while we are in the light to him, and knoweth how to correſpond with our corruption, and to ſuit his temptation to our natural temper (wherewith he is well acquainted) and to our calling, and our company, to the preſent ſtrait, to our predominant inclination and to our retirement, and ſolitude, yea that he is one who knoweth how to follow in, and ply with ſuch a gale, when we are in hot blood, or in any diſtemper, and diſcompoſure of ſpirit.

7. That hé can transform himſelf into an angel of light and ſuit his temptations to the ſpiritual exerciſes, and enjoyments of the ſaints; that there are temptations on the right hand as well as the left, which are ſo refined, and ſo like a chriſtian exerciſe that they can ſcarcely diſcern the weed from the flower, and moſt dreadful errours from the choiceſt truths, to which they oft have a great reſemblance, though at laſt it doth appear that the native tendency even of the moſt ſpecious errours in the judgment is to looſneſs in practice, and to make men religiouſly irreligious.

8. That he is alſo a roaring lion, which they have oft proved by the dreadful blaſphemous injections, theſe fiery darts which are thrown in with violence, wherewith there is no concurrence of the inclination, or conſent, but a diſcernible force put upon them, aſſaulting them with moſt horrid atheiſtical thoughts, even while their heart doth riſe with abhorrence, and enter their diſſent againſt the ſame.

9. That he is a moſt reſtleſs adverſary who is going ſtill about and giveth no ceſſation, but with purpoſe to return at ſome greater advantage, and is no leſs terrible in his flight than in his aſſault, and that he can ſpeak out of a friend as well as out of a foe, yea, and doth then moſt dangerouſly tempt, when the temptation is leaſt ſeen, or diſcovered.

10. That his temptations do not only drive at engaging of the heart to bring ſin to the thought, but alſo the bringing it forth to the act, for putting ſome blot upon their walk and converſation.

11. That he is one who is overcome by reſiſtance, and doth flee before theſe that withſtand him, which they have oft proved, that they have returned from prayer with the ſpoil of their adverſary, and at ſuch a time have been made to wonder, how that which hath oft foyled them, ſhould have been their temptation.

12. They alſo find by frequent obſervation, that though he is moſt ſubtil, being indeed one who through long experience and continued practice hath attained a great deal of dexterity in tempting, yet, that he hath one uſual method, and ſuch devices which the ſerious chriſtian, by daily experience and watchfulneſs, may eaſily diſcern and perceive his temptations in their riſe, and at a diſtance while they were as it were, creeping up the wall; yea thus in ſome meaſure he may find out the depths of ſatan, and know how to avoid the net ſpread by that great fowler.

IV. *That the promiſes of the Word which are held forth to the godly* for their uſe, and encouragement while they are in the way, *have a certain accompliſhment*, and are a ſafe ground to adventure upon, and worthy to be credited, is a truth tried in all ages, whereto experience of the ſaints can give a large teſtimony.

Now in ſpeaking to this grave ſubject, it is not needful to ſpeak any thing of the nature, and diverſe kinds of promiſes, nor whence it is that we live at ſo poor a rate, and ſo uncomfortably while ſuch a well as this, is at our hand, for its eaſy to read the cauſe within our ſelves, we ſow ſparingly, and venture little out, therefore we have ſo ſmall an increaſe; there is a price for wiſdom, but it is in the hands of fools who have no heart thereto, but this doth not concern us here, for I only aim to hold forth this, that the promiſes which God hath given his people in ſcripture, are of unqueſtionable verity, and have as real and ſure performance in the ſaints experience, as they are ſure of that which cometh moſt neceſſarily to paſs, by the work and concurrence of natural cauſes as that the fire doth burn, when combuſtible matter is added, or the ſun riſe after it's going down; for indeed this truth is ſo manifeſt, proved by ſuch innumerable experiments, amidſt the various changes of a chriſtians condition, that we might ſummon as many witneſſes as have been followers of God in the world, which are not a few, who in all ages have put the promiſes to an eſſay, and put their ſeal thereto that God is true, yea, to ask at ſuch, if they know whether there be a truth in ſcripture promiſes, that cometh not to paſs, I think were to enquire at a living man, whether he ſeeth and feeleth, or if there be ſuch a thing as motion, ſince they have as ſure and ſenſible a demonſtration of the one as he hath of the other. But e're I ſpeak any thing particularly to this, I would firſt premiſe ſome things to clear what we underſtand here, by the ſaints experience of the truth of the promiſes, in theſe following conſiderations.

1. We would conſider, though the ſcripture hath here it's accompliſhment and is intended for the uſe of the church, and every particular chriſtian, while on the way in his militant condition, yet there are ſome promiſes of the word, yea the greateſt, which belong to the ſaints, that will not be fulfilled, until they have caſt off their armour, and are called to divide the ſpoil, their experience of which, will be the high prize of the calling of God in Chriſt, whereof all which they enjoy is but an earneſt. 2. We would conſider that the great intent of the ſcripture and promiſes thereof is not for contemplation, but that we may know them by experience, and drive a bleſſed trade and commerce therewith, the merchandize of which is better than that of gold, for here lyeth the chriſtians life in the world, yea, it is a great part of their talent, the promiſes, which are not to be laid up in their heart, and memory, as in a napkin, but they muſt give an account what experience they have gained thereby, and thus the diligent hand ſhould make rich. 3. What ever be the different ſizes and degrees of experience among the ſaints, according to their growth, and age in Chriſt, yet it is certain that the meaneſt who have intereſt in the promiſes, and did ever lay hold on them in earneſt and put them to trial muſt know ſomething of the performance of the ſame in their own caſe; for the, Lord doth not ſuffer his work in his People to want a ſeal. 4. The godlies experience hereof, is then much made out, when they are much in obſervation, and we know little of the truth and performance of the promiſes, becauſe we are not more habitually in a frame to obſerve; thus he goeth by, and we perceive not; but they never wanted confirmations, who were ſeriouſly ſeeking to be confirmed in the truth of the word. 5. The ſpecial mercies and providences of a chriſtian life are a certain return of the promiſe, and in that way do meet them,

them, as the proper channel of their conveyance; for they are the ſure mercies of the covenant, and how refreſhful is it, that all the ſeveral caſes of the ſaints, and their deliverance therefrom, their meaneſt as well as their greateſt neceſſities, are comprehended in the word, and under ſome promiſe, and were all foreſeen in his everlaſting view, who hath ſo marvelouſly ſuited the ſame to all that his People ſtand in need of, as if it had been directed to ſuch, and ſuch a chriſtian only. 6. This helpeth to make the mercies of the godly man to have a peculiar and ſweet reliſh, and to be ſome way twice his mercy, when he gets them in ſo immediate a way reached to him as it were out of the promiſe, and as an obſervable return from heaven, when thus the Lord ſealeth his word to him by his work, and the way of the word he findeth hath been the way of his comfortable deliverance; that when he hath had no other eſcape, but to turn in to the promiſe and to caſt himſelf upon it, he gained this experience; he truſted in God, and was helped and can give in this teſtimony of him, that he hath both ſpoken it and himſelf alſo hath done it, according to his word. 7. It is not any extraordinary thing, we here underſtand, by the chriſtian mans experience of the truth of the promiſes, it is not a rapture or revelation, or ſuch as ſome of the ſaints have upon ſome ſingular, and ſpecial account had; for we have not any promiſe for theſe things, but it is ſomething well grounded upon the word, which conſtantly holdeth in the Lords ordinary way of procedure with his people, according to the tenor of the covenant, for his word doth good to them that walk uprightly, and doth certainly take place in the experience of every ſerious and diligent chriſtian. 8. This is not the teſtimony of a few, but the record of all the ſaints ſince the beginning, whoſe experience doth all moſt harmonioufly agree, and bear one witneſs that he is faithful who hath promiſed, and it is not that which a chriſtian hath found once or twice in his life, but the daily food of ſuch as live by faith. 9. This doth put a ſtrong obligation on the godly man to the word for the time to come, for theſe who have tryed it often, may with much confidence truſt it, in the day of their ſtrait. 10. The experience which the godly hath of the real performance of the promiſes is a moſt convincing evidence of his ſtate in Chriſt, it is the earneſt and pledge of the inheritance, and full accompliſhment of that which remaineth, that the Lord will make perfect what concerneth him, who hath been his help hitherto, and will be his exceeding great reward in the end, who hath made him find ſo much of the ſome way godlineſs here by the way. Now having premiſed theſe things, I ſhall here inſtance ſome particular promiſes, wherein the chriſtians moſt uſual trade and commerce doth lie, and to which they give in their ſeal and witneſs; I confeſs if all theſe proofs which the ſaints have had of the fulfilling of the promiſes could be gathered together, we might make uſe of that divine hyperbole, *The world could not contain the books that ſhould be written thereof.* O, what an admirable volume, what an excellent commentary and copy ſhould this be of the ſcripture, to ſee it thus turned over into the experience of every chriſtian; it would be ſome way as eaſy to number the drops of rain and dew ſince the creation, as to reckon all theſe precious drops and emanations of love, theſe ſenſible returns, and fulfilling of the promiſes, which they have had in their experience; I truly think it could hardly be believed, though it were told, what ſome of the godly here, have found in the way of the word; but it is ſufficient to anſwer the deſign of this work, to ſhew that there is a ſenſible demonſtration and performance of ſcripture promiſes, concerning which the experience of the ſaints in all ages do agree; that by many confirmations the Lord hath oft ſealed the truth thereof to their ſouls.

There

There are 10. ſpecial promiſes held forth to the godly in the word, which I ſhall here inſtance, and therewith hold forth, what a clear teſtimony their experience can give of the undoubted truth and accompliſhment of the ſame.

First, *Inſtance, is that promiſe given to beliving*, to ſuch who credit the naked word, when there is no probable appearance of its outmaking, and thus give God the glory of his faithfulneſs, which we have expreſly held forth, 1 *Chron.* xx. 20. *Pſal.* cxii. 7. 8. *Joh.* 1. 50.

To clear the accompliſhment of this promiſe, I ſhall but appeal to that teſtimony the ſaints in all ages have left thereof, yea to the preſent experience of the godly at this day, if they have not certainly found it ſo. 1. That when in a particular they have truſted God therewith and got their ſpirit quiet, in a recumbency on him, he hath dealt with them according to his word, yea if then from clear convincing returns of the promiſe they have not been made to ſay, it did never repent them, that they gave more credit to the teſtimony of God, than of their own hearts. 2. That they have not found a more ſweet, and obſervable iſſue than when their help lay moſt immediately on the word alone; never a more ſenſible deliverance than when leaſt of ſenſe, and moſt of faith was in carrying them through, when little of the creature, and much of God appeared in their mercy, and where they were at the loweſt, no way of eſcape but to throw themſelves on the promiſe; they have then had the beſt retreat, yea, their ſupply as ſenſibly felt, as their need and burden had formerly been. 3. That their greateſt difficulties, and ſhakings concerning the promiſe have helped to their further confirming and eſtabliſhment, ſo as they can ſay, the Lords way, by wrangling with them firſt, yea, to their ſenſe looſing their hold, hath helped to faſten it better, and that which for the time did ſpeak their caſe moſt helpleſs, hath made way for his more eminent appearance, and manifeſting of himſelf. 4. That their greateſt venture, and giving moſt out hath uſually had the richeſt income, the moſt eminent experiences of their life have followed the moſt adventurous acts of their faith, yea, upon an after reckoning they have oft found, that their adventuring of life, eſtate, and credit on the promiſe of God, even in theſe things, hath very obſervably been their making. 5. That where they have moſt been a friend to their faith, there hath faith alſo been moſt a friend to them, in their ſtanding to the credit of the promiſe, over the belly of greateſt objections, and falſe reports raiſed thereof, they have found a very evident mark of Gods reſpect to the ſame, cauſing them to ſee, that he will honour ſuch who thus honour him. And it is indeed worthy of a remark, what we have of *Caleb* upon record, that he took part with the promiſe of God againſt that diſcouraging report which then was raiſed of the *Anakims*, and their walled cities; and therefore the inheritance of the children of *Anak* was given to *Caleb* and his ſons, in their lot, from the Lord. 6. That believing doth always make way for ſenſe, and in their cloſing with the naked word of promiſe, they have not wanted the ſeal of the ſpirit of promiſe, but have found a ſweet calm, their burden ſenſibly eaſed, when once they got it laid over on the word, which they can ſay hath been their firſt reſting place, like the very fixing of the motion of the needle towards it's right point, when their ſpirit had been reſtleſs, and in greateſt agitation. 7. That theſe greateſt diſappointments, which their hope in the word ſeemed to have, they have found afterwards moſt to their advantage, when their returns have not only been according to their faith, but have often exceeded their adventure, and been far beyond what they believed, yea, that from frequent experience they may ſay, the iſſue of truſting the word, how long ſoever they thought it deferred, yet, came always in ſeaſon, was never too late and out of time. 8. That

this

this did never occaſion bitter reflections, or was their upcaſt before the world, that they truſted God in a day of ſtrait and were not helped; but this teſtimony have all ſuch left, who have moſt credited it in a diſmal hour, that none ſhould be afraid of them to hazard upon ſuch a hand, and venture on the promiſe, for, their faith hath oft taken them well and comfortably through, where both ſenſe and reaſon have been ready to ſink.

Second *Inſtance*, whereby we may ſee the performance of the promiſe in chriſtian experience is this, *That God truly heareth prayer*, is near unto his people for what they call upon him, agreeable to his word, and will anſwer their deſires, we have this promiſe moſt expreſs, *Phil.* iv. 6. *Pſal.* xxxii. 16. *Pſal.* lxv. 2. *Pſal.* xci. 15. Now the accompliſhing of this part of ſcripture is ſo very clear, that I can atteſt the experience of all the generation of the righteous, ſince the beginning, what frequent and unanſwerable confirmations they have got of this truth in their chriſtian walk, ſo that I am ſure, no man ever was in earneſt in the matter of religion, and a ſtranger to this; yea, that he was never more certainly perſwaded of any thing, than of this that God doth hear prayer. O if mens ſouls were but in their ſouls ſtead whoſe evening wreſtlings, and teares, the Lord hath oft turned into a morning ſong, they ſhould know this is no deluſion. I ſhall here touch ſomething of that experience which by many proofs the ſaints can give as a witneſs to this promiſe.

1. That when they have oft with *Hanna* gone in before the Lord in the bitterneſs of their ſpirit, they have been made to return with a ſenſible and marvelous change in their caſe; yea, when in going about prayer, they have been put to wreſtle with much diſtemper and deadneſs, they have oft ſeen the wind diſcernably change, and therewith their ſpirits lightned from under that burden, an obſervable calm, and ſerenity after much inward perturbation, yea they can ſay that they have found their hearts thawed, and put in a fluſh of tenderneſs, upon the back of a moſt ſenſible reſtraint. 2. That acceſs and liberty to pour forth their ſouls to God when he hath filled their mouth with arguments, and inabled them both to wreſtle and wait, they have found a favourable *Criſis* and begun deliverance, yea, the very turn of a ſad caſe, which they have got from the Lord, as the pledge of a further anſwer, and that when he thus prepareth the heart, he doth cauſe his ear to hear. 3. That when they have been under a moſt dark cloud, they have found their ſky clear, have got a very ſenſible taſte of Gods acceptation in prayer and of his taking their ſute off their hand, even while the matter was ſtill in dependance before him, yea that they have oft had ſuch a ſatisfying impreſſion of Gods mind, and perſwaſion of his anſwering their deſire, as hath helped them cheerfully to wait, yea ſometimes to ſing the triumph before the victory. 4. That when they had been much in prayer, they muſt alſo ſay, it hath been the time wherein the ſpirit hath flouriſhed, was moſt lively, yea then they had their beſt days, then the candle of the Lord ſhined upon their paths, and his dew lay all night upon their branches, and they have found there is an evident and proportionable abatement of their ſpiritual life, and encouragement in God, according to their ſlackneſs in the exerciſe of this duty. 5. They have many times found, that when there was nothing left them, but to return in to God, and they knew of no other way to come through but to pray, and look up, they never found a more ſweet and ſeaſonable deliverance; ſo that moſt obſervable times of prayer have been alſo the moſt obſervable times of their experience, and they can ſay from many proofs, it is no hopeleſs buſineſs, which is put over upon God by prayer, though there be ſmall outward appearance. 6. That

it is not in vain to follow out a ſute before the throne, but acceſs and intereſt in heaven is as ſure a way to come ſpeed (which they know well) as greateſt intereſt upon earth; having ſo evidently found, while many ſeek the rulers favour, that the determination of every thing is from the Lord. 7. That prayer with quiet waiting in the uſe of means getteth comfortably through, where overcaring and carnal policy, in the uſe of all other ſhifts hath been forced to ſtick. 8. They know by experience, that as there are judicial times, wherein an inhibition as it were is laid on them from the Lord, in their wreſtling, yea, and a ſore reſtraint on their ſpirits, which hath been very ſenſible, ſo alſo they have found times of prayer let forth, before ſome ſpecial mercy, and deliverance to the church, whereby they could in ſome meaſure diſcern its near approach. 9. That after ſome ſolemn addreſs, and application to God by prayer and faſting in a day of ſtrait, they have oft ſeen cauſe even from that day and upward to date a remarkable return and deliverance, in which even common obſervers might diſcern what an evident anſwer the churches interceſſion with God in times of extremity hath had. 10. I may add, the ſaints know this ſo well by experience that ſurely God heareth prayer, even in ſuch a particular, that they can with much confidence adventure and make an errand of the meaneſt, as well as their greateſt concernments to him, having ſo oft tried and found that ſerioufneſs and ſincerity in addreſs to God was never in vain, but whatever be the times, therein his promiſe taketh place, their heart ſhall live that ſeek God.

THIRD *Inſtance, Is the promiſe of the ſpirit, and pouring out of the ſame*, which we have clear in the word, *Iſa.* lix. 21. *Joh.* xiv. 16. *Luk.* iv. 49. *Rom.* viii. 16. The accompliſhment of which is ſo manifeſt, ſuch a ſenſible demonſtration thereof, in the experience of the ſaints that I am ſure this can no more be denyed, than theſe who are warmed with the heat of the ſun can deny their ſenſe and feeling, that the ſun hath ſuch an influence: and doth not the chriſtians ſpiritual walk bear as convincing a witneſs to the fulfilling of this promiſe, as any living man, by walking in the way ſheweth that he hath a ſoul, and principle of life within him. Now to demonſtrate this a little I would but touch ſome of the ordinary experiences of the ſaints therein, which they do teſtify and by clear undenyable evidences know to be no deluſion.

1. That which cauſeth ſo real a change upon them, which maketh them alive to God, who once were dead, creating them as it were of new, that which bringeth a clod of earth ſo near heaven, raiſeth ſo far above themſelves to a delightful converſe with things not ſeen, that while their place and abode is here, their company and fellowſhip is above; that which maketh all things new to them, and doth ſo far change their nature and inclination, as cauſeth them find more ſweetneſs in a ſpiritual life than in the pleaſures of ſin, yea, reconcileth them with the law and exerciſes of a chriſtian, where once there was ſuch contrariety, O! is not this a real effect of the ſpirit and no imaginary thing. 2. That whereof they were altogether ignorant, when they were ſtrangers to God, and knew not if there was a Holy Ghoſt, but by report, now, ſince their being born again they find themſelves entred in another world, brought out of darkneſs unto a marvelous light, and of this are ſure, that once they were blind, but now they ſee, is not this a proof of the truth of this promiſe? 3. That which maketh them ſee more of God in his word and works, at one time than at another; whence is this difference; and unequality, the ſcriptues are at one time the great ſound of the law, which are at an other time, but a common ſound to them; the object is the ſame, but O! what different manifeſtation thereof? whence is it that ſuch a light

ſpring-

ſpringeth up in the word, that openeth up this deep, and maketh them ſee the wonders of his law, and within a little but dark night, do not the ſaints know this well, and that it is no deluſion? 4. That which maketh ſuch ſenſible liberty in their ſoul and confidence in their approach to God, after ſore bondage and fear, which raiſeth them often ſo far above their ordinary frame as they are not only quickned and refreſhed themſelves, but do obſervably warm others, O how piercing and ſavory are their words, which ſhew what difference there is oft, betwixt a chriſtian and himſelf, betwixt a dead exerciſe of a gift which reacheth the ear, and that which melteh the heart, and doth even reach by-ſtanders with a pleaſant perfume. 5. That which maketh ſuch a ſudden change in their caſe under ordinances, that their heart that died within them as a ſtone, e're ever they were aware hath taken life, and need-fire with a word, yea, hath been poured out within them ſo as their beloved's voice hath had an other ſound; O then they think not the time long, the word is the honey from the comb, ſo as they have oft wiſht a perpetual arreſt upon their ſpirit in ſuch a condition, that none may ſtirr up their beloved until he pleaſe; can that be any deluſion? 6. That which bringeth in promiſes ſeaſonably into their mind in the day of their ſtrait, and cauſeth the word agree ſo ſuitably to their preſent caſe with ſuch a ſatisfying impreſſion of the ſame, as doth give moſt ſenſible and preſent eaſe. 7. That which ſo clearly by the word diſcovereth to men their own heart, and doth ſearch them out in their moſt cloſe and retired thoughts, that they have been oft made to wonder, how the word is upon all their ſecrets; is not this the candle of the Lord? 8. That which doth demonſtrate their ſtate and being in Chriſt, by an argument which is beyond all words, and doth by power in an irreſiſtible way anſwer all objections, and turn the moſt froward caſe into a bleſſed calm, and hath made a ſimple word more effectual in a moment, than moſt perſwaſive arguments could be. 9. That which maketh ſuch abundant joy ſpring up in the heart, when there is no viſible grounds for the ſame, like the dry bone guſhing out water, muſt ſurely be ſome ſupernatural and excellent power, that cannot only bring it out of nothing, but out of contraries. 10. That which giveth them ſo ſenſible a taſte of the powers of the world to come, ſuch a raviſhing glance of the inheritance, that they could hardly ſometime forbear to riſe at midnight and ſing for joy in the hope thereof, and hath given them ſuch a diſcovery of God at ſome ſpecial times, as hath made them judge that all they ever knew of him before, was but by hearing of the ear. 11. That which is ſo diſcernible and ſenſibly felt in the preſent time, that Chriſts return to the ſoul and the outletting of the ſpirit, hath been as evident oft to the ſaints, as to that martyr who was forced to cry out at the ſtake, *He is come, he is come*; and hath been ſo ſweet when enjoyed, that the remembrance of ſome of theſe times hath been very pleaſant and refreſhing, yea this is ſuch a thing as moſt obſervably melts the godly man in the way of his duty, according to the word. 12. That is no deluſion, the withdrawing whereof is ſo ſenſible to them, as it maketh their duty wherein they have had delight, become their burden, when they are put to row with oars, the wind being gone, and maketh it like night to the ſoul, when the ſun is gone down, and ſad experience hath oft ſhewed them, how the overclouding of their ſoul, the withdrawing of the ſpirit and comfort doth obſervably follow a ſitting up of duty and yeilding to any known ſin, by which it is grieved.

FOURTH *Inſtance, is that Promiſe for direction* which God hath given his people in the word, *that he will guide them with his Counſel*, will order, *and direct their ſteps, who do commit their way to him, and teach them the way they ſhall chooſe*, Pſal. xxxvii. 5. Pſal. xxv. 9, 14. Pſal. lxxiii. 24.

The

The fulfilling of which hath been ſo manifeſt to theſe who ever made earneſt of acknowledging of God in their ways, and committing the conduct thereof to him, that I ſhall but atteſt their experience, if they have not this teſtimony to give.

1. That to truſt God with their caſe, and give him the guiding of their way hath taken them much more eaſily through a plunging caſe, than overcaring anxiety, yea, the Lords directing their ſteps, and making things ſucceſsful, when they have committed the ſame to him, hath been often as ſenſible to them, as their ſtrait and difficulty was. 2. That the way of the word hath been the beſt expedient for taking them ſafe and comfortably through, and that they never repented that they did more conſult their duty than inclination, when they were at a ſtand about a particular, and did not debate the command, even while there ſeemed a lion in the way. 3. That they were never left without counſel and direction, when their eye was ſingle and ſerious about it, and it was not ſo much want of light as of an heart to cloſe therewith, that made their way oft ſo dark, but when they ſubjected themſelves to Gods mind, they found, that ſuch who follow him, ſhall not walk in darkneſs. 4. That light and counſel doth meet men in following the command and the practice of known duty, hath helped them to know more their duty, and that light did moſt abound when it was their ſerious ſtudy to follow the ſame. 5. They found it was never in vain after Gods mind by prayer, and alſo in the temple to make a reference of a particular to him, when it was too hard for them, but have often ſeen the word evidently directed to ſuch and ſuch a caſe, as if they had gotten a return from heaven by an audible voice. 6. They alſo know, that Gods following in light, with a powerful impreſſion, his teaching the reins, and inſtructing with a ſtrong hand is no deluſion, but the ſure and well grounded experience of moſt ſolid chriſtians in all ages, yea, moſt diſcernible from any falſe impulſe, and that ſome ſpecial piece of work and ſervice, which God hath lay'd in their way, wants not uſually ſome ſpecial call, backed with ſuch light and authority, as in an irreſiſtible way, can anſwer all objections, to make them go bound in the ſpirit, about ſuch a duty. 7. How Gods ſpecial directing hand hath been oft very obſervable, not only in preventing and croſſing their way to withdraw them by ſome ſharp diſpenſation from their purpoſe; but ſenſibly overpowering them, ſo that they have been plucked as it were back from unavoidable hazard, that they could not find their paths. 8. I ſhall add, they have oft obſervably found, how eaſy their way was made to them when the Lord doth countenance and proſper the ſame; what ſweet concurrence of providences, how then difficulties have moſt ſenſibly been taken out of the way, yea, wind aud tide going along with them, in ſuch a manner, that they have been forced to ſee and confeſs a divine hand therein.

Fifth *Inſtance, is the promiſe of pardon and forgiveneſs* which God hath given his people in the word, that for his names ſake he will blot out their iniquity, and remember their ſin no more, yea, is ready to pardon, which is expreſly held forth to theſe who are truly humbled, *Mic.* vii. 18. *Jer.* xxxi. 34. *If.* xliii. 25. Now that there is a real accompliſhment of this, I am ſure the experience of the ſaints can in all ages clearly witneſs, what joy and peace this hath occaſioned, what a ſenſible demonſtration and ſolemn confirmations they have had of this promiſe, ſo as their very bones might ſing; *Who is like unto thee, O Lord?* It is true real pardon of ſin doth not always infer the ſenſible feeling thereof, and when it is remitted in heaven, there is not always a declaration of it in the conſcience, but it is alſo ſure, that this is ſenſibly felt, and that it is tryed by all, even all the generation of the righ-

teous to have had as powerful an operation on a diſquiet, troubled ſoul, as ever wine, or the choiceſt cordial could have on the ſick, or faint; O! if theſe who queſtion this, were in their caſe, to whom God ſpeaketh peace after a ſtorm, they ſhould know how real and certain that is: I would offer the chriſtians witneſs to this promiſe, from many, many experiments, by which the Lord hath ſealed it to their ſoul, whereby they know aſſuredly it is no fancy or deluſion.

1. How this hath as ſenſible a connection with the ſerious exerciſe of contrition and repentance in their experience, as it certainly hath in the word and promiſe; while they find, that in ſilence, and keeping up their caſe from God, their bones have been troubled, their ſpirit in a reſtleſs and diſquiet condition, until once they made an addreſs, and got their ſoul vented by confeſſing to the Lord which was then like a kindly turn and cool of a fever. 2. They know it is no deluſion that is found ſo certain a cure to a wonuded ſpirit, under the ſenſe of ſin, a wound which the world and all its diverſions could never heal, whoſe pain and grief no muſick can allay (a drop of divine diſpleaſure being enough to turn all their pleaſures into wormwood and gall) but, O! a taſte of this unſpeakable cordial, one warming look of a reconciled God, they know by experience, can give preſent caſe. 3. It is no deluſion which they can command no more than the ſun to ſhine when overclouded, or the wind to blow, but when it liſteth, which the moſt perſuading moral arguments can no ways effectuate, nor all their former experience, yea, the letter of moſt refreſhing promiſes, which ſometimes are to them, but as the white of an egg without taſte, until once the ſpirit breath, which not only diſcovereth the ground of their joy in the word, but doth alſo cauſe them to rejoyce therein, when it ſhineth upon the ſame. 4. It muſt be no deluſion which cauſeth ſo marvelous a change that after greateſt diſquieting fears, they have found moſt ſenſible manifeſtations of love, the greateſt flood on the back of the loweſt ebb in their ſpiritual condition, which oft hath forced them to retreat, what their fears and jealouſies did utter; yea, hath made them enquire with wonder, whence they are ſo chearful to day, who yeſter-night were ſo broken and cruſht: whence their ſpirit ſhould be in ſo ſweet a calm, that ſo lately was like the raging and troubled ſea. 5. That this hath oft met them, as a bleſt ſurprizal and unexpected welcome, when they have in a backſliding caſe come in to God, they certainly know, that when they knew not how to adventure, and at what end of their raveled condition to begin, counts having run long over, yet on their very firſt addreſs have got a ſweet diſappointment to their fears, been helped to their feet, yea, ſome times have had as it were the fatted calf killed to make merry with their friends. 6. That which hath an audible voice within, ſo ſtrong an impreſſion upon the ſoul, which carrieth with it ſuch a clear ſatisfying diſcovery of Gods heart and love, is ſurely no deluſion, while the intimation of that one truth, *Your ſins are forgiven*; or any other word of promiſe for that end, they have found to be an argument beyond words, which they could not reſiſt, but for the time, have been as ſure, they ſee and feel this, as that they live, yea, can no more now call it in queſtion, than formerly they could get it believed. 7. That is no deluſion which cauſeth them with another kind of freedom, approach to God, maketh them know there is a ſpirit of adoption which ſets the ſoul at liberty from the ſore bondage and thraldom under which their former backſliding had put them, yea, a thing not only ſenſibly felt by themſelves, but may be diſcerned by others, while they cannot ſmother the joy of their heart or hide in their countenance ſuch a change of their condition, that truly God hath dealt comfortably with them. 8. Hath

not this the ſaints in all ages witneſſed even a joy unſpeakable and full of glory, which though but of ſhort continuance, yet for the preſent ſo ſtrong, as hath raviſhed their ſoul with the hope of the inheritance above, and clear view of their intereſt in it, yea, ſometimes, made them ſing for joy, in expectation of that bleſſed day, but, O! this is better felt than expreſſed. 9. And in a word, can that be a deluſion that hath oft turned the poor mans hell into a heaven, which tryſts the chriſtian in the way of his duty, and the work doth ſo exactly anſwer the promiſe, moſt ſenſibly felt after greateſt ſhakings of the conſcience by the law, and can make a ſad outward lot ſo very ſweet and pleaſant, cauſe them triumph over the wrath of men, to ſing in a dungeon, to abound and have all things under greateſt wants, look grim death chearfully in the face in its moſt dreadful aſpect, yea, doth make ſo great and viſible a difference betwixt the chriſtian and himſelf.

Sixth *Inſtance, Is that promiſe of encouragement and ſupport under the croſs*, which is expreſly held forth in the word, *that the Lord will own his people, bear their charges*, and be with them in trouble in the day of their ſuffering for his truth; yea, *will bind up the broken in heart, and heal their wounds*, Pſal. xci. 15. Iſa. xliii. 2. xli. 17. and xlix. 14. Pſal. ix. 9. Iſa. li. 12. Now that this promiſe is a truth, and hath a certain accompliſhment, the experience of the ſaints in all ages will witneſs, and we know their teſtimony is true, what at ſolemn times of Gods preſence they have had in a barren wilderneſs, how great a cloud of witneſſes doth ſeal this, and give their teſtimony to the croſs of Chriſt, of which we may ſay, the fame and ſweet ſavour hath gone forth and ſpread abroad through the church, the fathers have told it to the children, and one generation to another, but how little a part thereof can be expreſſed! I think it would be a marvelous record, if the ſuffering and priſon experiments of the ſaints were particularly ſet down, what they have found under the croſs, but it is well, we know this promiſe hath been, and this day is evidently ſealed, concerning which I dare atteſt the experience of as many as did ever drink of this bleſſed cup, and were counted worthy to ſuffer for the teſtimony of Chriſt, if this be not faithful and true witneſſes.

1. That they have oft atteſted what communion with God is in the ſecret duties of a chriſtian, alſo in the publick ordinances, and in a ſpecial meaſure, at ſome more ſolemn times, but O! never knew his preſence and communion with him more ſenſibly than under the croſs, yea, have found that the work, and ſervice of a ſuffering time, as it is not the ordinary ſervice of every day, hath alſo a peculiar, and more than ordinary allowance. 2. That they never knew divine ſtrength more ſenſibly, than when they have been moſt preſſed above their own ſtrength, that in the day they were caſt on Gods immediate care and ordinary means of their help moſt withdrawn, they had never leſs cauſe to complain, but might often ſay this as their experience, they thirſted not when he led them through the wilderneſs, yea, that they have no times of their life found their mercies more obſervably come to them, more ſweet and ſatisfying, than when by prayer and believing, they were put to dig the well, and wait for the rain coming down to fill it. 3. That they never found more true liberty than in the houſe of bondage, more refreſhing company than amidſt their greateſt ſolitude, while they found him near, whom gates and barrs cannot ſhut out in the day when all things elſe ſeemed to frown upon them, that their midnight ſongs have been ſweeter than all the proſperity they ſometimes enjoyed, and that they have oft proved, that the deeper any are in affliction for Chriſt and his truth, they are alſo the deeper in conſolation. 4. They muſt ſay the moſt ſatisfying, and clear diſcoveries

of

of the word are under ſearching and ſharpeſt trials, that a ſanctifyed exerciſing affliction, they have found one of the beſt interpreters of the Bible, and the word then to be another thing, than it is at other times, yea, even to have been that to them, which they could deſire it to be, ſo as they are ſure it hath been ſhaped out and directed for that preſent plunge their ſoul was in. 5. That there is a very eaſy paſſage and diſpatch betwixt heaven and an oppreſſed afflicted ſoul, an obſervable vent by prayer, and more ſenſible acceſs to Gods face, when other things have moſt frown'd, yea, they can witneſs from experience, *he ſtayeth his rough wind in the day of his Eaſt wind.* While he ſhutteh one door he hath ſet another open, that when the ſtorm without hath been very ſharp, they have found a ſweet calm and ſun-ſhine within to make it eaſy, and when he layeth on one ſore trial, he will take another off. 6 They can tell what a ſweet comfortable parting they have oft had with ſome ſharp trial, which at the firſt was bitter as death, but in the cloſe, after ſanctified exerciſe under the ſame, they have found cauſe to leave it their bleſſing, and confeſs that the time of greateſt jealouſie, and fear upon their part, they have found on Gods part, hath been a time of greateſt kindneſs and love, the ſharpeſt wounds from ſuch an hand and heart as his, hath tended to a cure, yea, that circumſtance and ingredient in the ſame, which of all was moſt bitter and grievous, even there they have found their deliverance and encouragement moſt remarkable. 7. That the peculiar advantage of a ſanctifyed trial is not ſo well ſeen in the preſent time, as afterwards, when the caſe hath altered, then they found a long and rough ſtorm recompenced at their landing, with a rich loading of experience, another kind of diſcovery of God, his way, and the certainty of his word than they formerly had attained to; ſo as now they can ſpeak of him, and the good of the croſs, and adventuring any thing for Chriſt, with ſome greater eſteem, on an other ground than report, or an hearing thereof by the ear. 8. I ſhall add what hath been the frequent teſtimony of theſe who ever endured tribulation for the goſpel, that their remembrance and after reckoning, upon this account hath not been ſad or bitter, when they ſat down, and compared their gain with their loſs, their upmaking with theſe days of trial that have gone over their head, that they would not then exchange their experience, or want what they have found by the croſs, no not for many more days of trouble and affliction.

Seventh *Inſtance, is that promiſe of the word which integrity, in an evil time hath,* that it ſhall preſerve their ſteps, and be the beſt mean to help theſe through that keep Gods way, yea, even in this life ſhall not want ſome witneſs of Gods reſpect, *Pſal.* xviii. 25. *Pſal.* cxii. 4. *Rev.* iii. 10. Now to hold forth the accompliſhment of this, I may with confidence appeal to the obſervation of the ſaints in all ages, who ever made it their ſerious ſtudy to keep their garments clean in a time of tryal, if their experience hath not this teſtimony to give.

1. That though at preſent, honeſty in evil times hath brought them in hazard, and with *Joſeph* to a priſon; yet, it hath brought them out alſo, with obſervable advantage, yea, however the Lord did order their deliverance, they have found this did land them well, and always bring them to a comfortable harboury. 2. That honeſty and faithfulneſs hath an authority even on the conſcience of their enemies, and leaveth uſually a conviction upon them: yea, hath forced a teſtimony and approbation from ſuch men, and they have oft found better entertainment, than theſe who in a ſinful way have ſought to pleaſe them. 3. They have found this always the choiceſt expedient and beſt policy in a dangerous time, which hath obſervably met them, when they had

had moſt to do; a thing whereof they have reap'd the fruits in the day of their ſtrait and times of judgment, yea, though it hath occaſioned ſometime their ſuffering, yet it hath been alſo their ſafety and protection from ſadder ſufferings. 4. That though integrity is oft under a dark cloud of reproach, yet it getteth ſtill well out from under the ſame, and hath ſhined uſually more bright afterward: So as they might have had cauſe to obſerve, what unexpected means the Lord hath made uſe of, for their clearing. 5. That while their enemies might have (were it not for the preventing goodneſs of God) quarrelled upon ſome other ground, they have been obſervably led to purſue, and make them the but of their malice for their honeſty and that wherein they have peace before God, and have been keeped from hitting on the right cauſe. 6. They find how unſpeakably ſweet this is upon an afer reckoning, and in the evening of their life, that then they reap a comfortable harveſt of that they have ſown with much ſuffering, and tears; O! then it doth not repent them that integrity was their choice. 7. They have ſometime found a hundred fold even in this life, and an obſervable advantage in that which they have been willing to loſs and hazard moſt. 8. They muſt alſo ſay, integrity was never their ruin, but deliverance was oft brought about in a way they could not have expected, yea the Lords ſhutting all other doors upon them, hath been that he might open one himſelf, like *Hagars* well ſpringing up in the wilderneſs. 9. That in making their aim, when they had a large heart for God, they have not then wanted an opportunity for evidencing the ſame, their encouragement hath abounded with their duty, and they have got much in, in giving much out for Chriſt, that there was no ſuch feaſt in the world, as they have ſenſibly found in the teſtimony of a good conſcience.

Eight *Inſtance, is that promiſe* which is held forth to the chriſtian in the word, *of ſtrength, and aſſiſtance to go about duties*, Iſa. xl. 29, 31. Pſal. xviii. 6, 14. Pſal. lxxxiv. 5. Pſal. lxviii. 28. To clear this, that it hath an unqueſtionable performance, I atteſt the experience of the generation of the righteous; who ever knew what it was to ſerve the Lord in the ſpirit, who by many ſenſible confirmations, have not proven the certainty of theſe things?

1. That when they have gone about duty under much deadneſs and ſtraitneſs of ſpirit, they have found a very ſenſible enlargemet, and got their bonds looſed, which ſurely they could no more command, without the concurrence of divine help, and ſomething above nature than theſe who ſpread out the ſail can command a fair wind, when it is croſs. 2. That Cods help and concurrence was never more diſcernible carrying them through, and making ſtronger than in the day, that, to their own ſenſe, they were moſt weak, when they have gone about duty under greateſt fears and fainting in ſpirit. 3. That when they had moſt confidence in themſelves, and judged they were at greateſt advantage in their going about ſome duty, they have uſually had the ſaddeſt retreat, and found that a ſure truth, *the race is not to the ſwift, nor the battel to the ſtrong*. 4. They know well what an influence divine concurrence hath, not only upon their inward frame, but alſo upon the exerciſe of their gifts, yea, upon the common ſtabilities of judgement and memory, and that there is a moſt remarkable difference, betwixt themſelves at one time, and another, according to the blowing of this wind. 5. They muſt alſo witneſs this as their experience, they found duty never more eaſy to them, than when they have had moſt to do and were keeped throngeſt therein; yea, when much work was laid on their hand, they then wanted not an enlarged allowance for the ſame. 6. That their ſpirits have been fitted for duty and carried through difficulties, where at ſome other time,

and

and in another frame they would have fainted, and thereby ſeen, that none need to ſcare at any piece of duty, when God calleth them to it, for while difficulties have appeared greateſt at firſt, the leſs they have found them afterward, yea, the hardeſt piece of ſervice oft made moſt eaſy. 7. They find God doth raiſe the ſpirit of his followers with a ſuitable elevation for their work, and can fit them for the ſervice of that time and other trials thereof, even beyond their ordinary reach. 8. That there is an open door, and ſenſible aſſiſtance, when there hath been work for the Goſpel in ſuch a place, while on the other hand they have found an inhibition ſenſibly ſerved on them, the door as it were ſhut when the tide was going back, and the word of the Goſpel at a ſtand in ſuch a part. 9. That it is not greateſt abilities which make undertakings ſucceſsful, it being in vain to riſe up early without the Lord. 10. It hath oft been their experience, that in following the way of God, his candle did then ſhine upon their paths, the ſpirit of the Lord was with them, and ſenſibly let out, the withdrawing whereof hath been no leſs diſcernible, while they turned aſide from him, that they have then been put to bear the burden alone, and found difficulty and deſpondency of ſpirit at once growing upon their hand. 11. I may add what theſe who are ſerious in religion have oft tried, that there is no ſuch help and furniture, for going about duties as a ſpiritual frame, and nearneſs with God, for then light and counſel, inward freedom and ſweet compoſure of ſpirit have brought moſt ſenſible advantage to them, their greateſt, yea and in their moſt common undertakings, this hath been very evident.

NINTH *Inſtance, is that great promiſe, we have* Rom. viii. 28. *That all things ſhall work together for good to them who love God, and* Pſal. xxv. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy, and truth to ſuch as keep his covenant.* I confeſs it is not eaſy ſometimes to reconcile Gods way and this piece of his part together, theſe who take only an ordinary paſſing look of providence, and cannot well judge, how ſuch things, wherewith oft the godly in their life are tryſted, ſhould contribute to their good and advantage; while nothing would ſeem more directly croſs to the ſame; but the chriſtian and wiſe obſerver can give another account, they know what a ſure truth this is, that there is no real jar betwixt the promiſe and providence of God in this matter; and whatever be the preſent thoughts, patient on waiting hath had cauſe to ſay this.

1. When his way and their thoughts have moſt differed, in the accompliſhment of his word, and bringing about their mercy, they have found it was to their advantage, that his choice was always better than theirs, yea they have been oft made to confeſs that their ſaddeſt diſappointments therein have tended to their further advantage. 2. That the Lord's denying them ſome outward thing which they have moſt deſired, they have found (as afterwards hath appeared) was to grant them more than their deſire; he hath refuſed them as it were an *Iſhmael*, that he might give them an *Iſaac*. 3. They can oft ſay they had been undone if they had not been undone; that it was their mercy, the Lord took ſuch a way to caſt them in a *fever*, to prevent a *Lethargy*, and by ſome ſharp croſs, gave them a wound in the fleſh to cure and let out ſome groſs impoſtume in their ſoul, which ſhould have made their caſe worſe. 4. How greateſt ſhakings have helped their further eſtabliſhment, ſo as they were never more confirmed than in that about which they have been moſt wrangled; yea, they have alſo found this the Lords way to cure their frowardneſs, and unbelief by ſome further addition to their croſs; that when they would not believe, he hath cauſed them come in upon a greater diſadvantage, while as a ſmall affliction hath made them impatient, a

more heavy and preſſing trouble hath been their cure, and helped them to keep ſilence under Gods hand. 5. That the growing of difficulties in their way, and ſome further preſſure in the trial, they have found it was from the Lord, in order to its removal, and to the bringing forth of ſome greater good, and that all viſible grounds of confidence have been oft broken, but with this advantage that their mercy, they had it more immediately out of Gods own hand, yea that the leſs moderation was whilſt their trial hath come to an extremity, they have found it then upon the turn, and their hope and encouragement oft made to ſpring up therewith. 6. How the Lords deferring their mercy which they had oft ſought hath been indeed their mercy and advantage, which did always come to them in ſeaſon, yea they muſt ſay his way is always neareſt, and waiting on God without making haſte doth truly make the quickeſt diſpatch. 7. Their experience can alſo witneſs, how mens reproach and venting their malice that way to ruin their reputation, hath oft been the very mean ordered by the Lord, to bring forth their further clearing and vindication, even by that very mean. 8. How by ſome ſad croſs he doth oft prevent a ſadder, which though ſtrange at firſt, have been forced upon after diſcovery to confeſs: "The man who riding in haſte to the ſea-port, to "have paſſage over ſeas with a ſhip going then off, fell and broke his leg by "the way, which was the ſaving of his life, for the ſhip, and all its paſſen-"gers periſhed in that voyage, yet this was a bitter aſtoniſhing providence to "him for the preſent." 9. How their loſs even by ſome ſad ſlip, and failing in their ſpiritul condition hath really tended to their further humbling and advantage, yea, that which brought them under ſome viſible decay, as to the wonted luſtre of their chriſtian profeſſion, hath helped them to grow more under ground, to the root and ſubſtantials of chriſtianity. 10. They can tell how theſe ſteps of the providence of God, which ſeemed moſt croſs to that deſign he was carrying on, yea, looked like the very cruſhing of their hope, have oft been the very means which hath wrought effectually to bring about their mercy. 11. I ſhall add but this, as the chriſtians witneſs to the truth of this promiſe, that ſharpeſt reproofs they have ſeemed the wounds of a friend, moſt preſſing ſtraits, made the mean for their further enlargement, how the Lord hath brought them into ſome dark and plunging trial, which then looked like a fearful pit, that he might bring them out with advantage, ſet their feet on a rock, and eſtabliſh their goings, yea, that in the hotteſt furnace, they loſt nothing, but what they might well ſpare, even ſome of their droſs.

TENTH *Inſtance*, I ſhall here ſet down, is *that general promiſe made to Godlineſs, and theſe who make it their ſerious ſtudy, that it ſhall be great gain, that verily it ſhall be well with the righteous, for they ſhall eat the fruit of their labour, and in keeping of the command there is a great reward*, 1 Tim. vi. 6. 1 Pet. iii. 12, 13. *Pſal.* xix. 11.

This is indeed a great concerning truth, but a truth which I am ſure none who did ever make earneſt of religion will call in queſtion; many ſure convincing experiments hath the chriſtian had thereof through his life, ſuch want not ſome diary and record, wherein they can caſt up the advantage they have reaped in cloſe following of God and their duty, yea from moſt remarkable providences, they may oft ſay, *This I had becauſe I keeped thy precepts*, now that this promiſe hath a large witneſs I ſhall here touch ſome things which I may with ſome confidence ſay, both in the preſent, and in former times have been proved and ſealed by the ſaints in their experience.

1. That they never more effectually conſulted their good and advantage than when they did with greateſt ſingleneſs conſult their duty, and leaſt with fleſh, and blood; they did never more truly ſeek themſelves, than in the practice of ſelf denyal, yea in that they intended God moſt, and leaſt their private intereſt,

reſt, they have therein found a very ſenſible upmaking. 2. That a ſerious endeavour to walk before God acceptably they have found ſtill the beſt policy, even in the worſt of times, and have found his way then very ſatisfying, while it was moſt their ſtudy how to pleaſe him, yea they have been obliged to confeſs, that when the Lords way was their choice, they have found it alſo their reward. 3. They have found more real joy and peace in withſtanding temptations, than in any thing temptation offerred, and in laying their intereſt at Gods feet, and their will underneath his, more than in all their carnal enjoyments: O the taſte, and teſtimony of Gods approbation! how ſweet a ſmile is his, in whoſe countenance heaven lieth. 4. That inward peace and tranquility of mind, a ſweet calm, and compoſure of ſpirit, doth as really attend a ſpiritual frame and walk, as the ſhadow the body, and their beſt and moſt comfortable days, wherein they have truly walked at liberty, have been when their heart was moſt ſubject to the law, with a ſingle reſpect to the ſame. 5. That religion and a ſpiritual walk is the beſt friend even as to a contented and comfortable life here in the world, and that they have then moſt acceſs to enjoy themſelves and their lot with ſatisfaction, when they enjoy God, yea, that nearneſs and communion with him, tendeth to the ſublimating and refining of their natural ſpirit, and hath been an obſervable help to their common abilities and parts. 6. That there is truly a reality in the bleſſing, which maketh a ſmall thing ſignify much, and yield more than greater abundance. 7. That when they give God their heart, it is then ſweet and matter of ſatisfaction to obſerve his ways, and their obſervation thereof is very refreſhing, how far the Lord condeſcends to their deſires when they ſum them all up in himſelf, and make him their delight. 8. That the pleaſure of religion is in the practice thereof, and the way to have religion eaſy, is to be throughly religious, duty is then ſweet when men do it from an inward principle; and holineſs ſhould be a more pleaſant work, yea, a reward to its ſelf, if there were leſs mixture of hypocriſy. 9. That real humility and walking low in their own eyes, and before God, did never loſe to them reſpect and credit from men; but ſelf-abaſement doth obſervably go before lifting up, and true honour followeth ſuch, who leaſt hunt after vain applauſe from the world. 10. That when they were more faithful to obſerve and improve a little, for their encouragement, more hath been added, and they never wanted matter to be thankful, when opportunities laid to their hand were improved and taken hold of for that end, yea, they have found there is a mercy within a mercy, and ſome peculiar mercy in every croſs, which is only found and brought forth by the exerciſed ſerious improver of the ſame. 11. That much ſincerity hath alſo much ſenſe following the ſame, ſecret honeſty before God hath met them openly before men, and faithfulneſs in chriſtian freedom purchaſed them more favour and reſpect even from the worſt, than when they ſtudied moſt to pleaſe them in a ſinful way. 12. That they never ſaw more clearly the gain and real advantage of godlineſs, and what a difference there is betwixt theſe that ſerve God, and theſe that ſerve him not, as in time of trouble and ſtrait, how that in tenderneſs their former walk, and that which they entertained in the morning, doth now meet them at night, and pay them home with advantage in an hour of temptation. 13. They have been forced to obſerve that there is an inviſible guard about his people in their duty, that the miniſtery of the angels towards ſuch is no deluſion, and have oft been made to wonder how hazard within an hair-breadth hath been prevented, relief and help come as betwixt the bridge and the water; how they have been ſenſibly preſerved amidſt greateſt dangers, while, as it were, an inhibition hath been ſerved upon theſe, that they ſhould come near, but not hurt, and only met with

them,

them, that they might read their preſervation from them. 14. That an enlarged heart doth meet with an enlarged allowance, and bearing burden with others of the people of God, hath helped to make their own private burden the lighter. 15. That real godlineſs and religion hath as much in hand, as may be a reward to its ſelf; which beautifieth the ſoul, and maketh the face and converſation to ſhine with an obſervable luſtre, that guardeth and preſerveth the heart from many vexing croſſes, preventeth ſad ſtroaks and ſorrows that others are pierced with, who will follow their idols and the ways of ſin, which are bitter in the cloſe. In a word, this is ſurely found, that God is the beſt friend, and when there is peace with him, things without do not offend, but they ſhall then underſtand what it is to be in league with the beaſts of the field and ſtones of the ground, having a ſweet agreement with all providences and diſpenſations that come in their way.

V. *That the Scripture threatnings have alſo a certain accompliſhment*, are found to be ſad earneſt, and do not fall to the ground, the chriſtian can alſo ſeal from his experience. It is not here to be underſtood the threatings of wrath (from which believers are freed in Chriſt) but of a fatherly diſpleaſure, which becauſe of ſin, may draw deep, yea, bring forth very dreadful effects, to witneſs that *it is an evil and bitter thing to depart from God*, and that their own doings ſhall chaſtiſe them, and theſe threatnings of the covenant, *If thy children forſake my law, I will puniſh their tranſgreſſion with rods*, &c. Pſal. lxxx. 30. are ſure truths which want not in every time a performance. To clear this er'e I ſpeak any thing particularly I would premit ſomethings to be conſidered.

1. That the word is a perpetual rule, which in every time muſt take place, and though affliction is a piece of the common miſery of man, yet, doth it not ariſe out of the duſt, neither fall out at an adventure, but doth oft viſibly follow the tract of ſin, as a ſlouth-hound, pointing at ſuch evils as the cauſe, by the ſtroak, and at the truth and fulfilling of the threatnings, written upon both. 2. We ſhould adore his ſoveraignty whoſe way both in the meaſure and manner of his peoples chaſtiſement, is ſo various, as that none can infallibly conclude, what he is to do in ſuch a caſe, I mean we are not to limit the Lord to ſuch a way and method in his working; yet, this we may aſſert and firmly conclude, that not only the threatnings of the word have a performance, but men may alſo have, even beforehand ſome more than probable conjecture, yea, a clear diſcovery, what ſuch a caſe doth threaten, and what will be the iſſue of a ſinful courſe, by conſidering the Lords ordinary procedure, both with themſelves and others, how ſin hath very ſad effects, and his way in all ages is ſtill uniform agreeing with its ſelf, and with the word. 3. Tho' a gracious ſtate doth ſurely ſave from wrath and condemnation, yet not from affliction and ſtroaks of divine anger becauſe of ſin; for he taketh vengeance on mens inventions, even when he will ſpare the inventors. 4. The Lord doth oft contend with his people for their folly and miſcarriages, more ſeverely than with others, and will not let paſs in them that which he paſſeth by in the world, without being a reprover; but when light and love and the law will not hedge in their way, he will ſet briers and thorns before them, yea, ſpeak by chaſtiſement upon their bones, to withdraw men from their purpoſe. 5. It is known, how very deep the holy anger of God may draw againſt his children; even ſometimes, to purſue them out of the land of the living, and follow them to the grave, with ſome remarkable ſtroak, yea, it hath made them dreadful examples of judgment in this life, for whom, he hath accepted an eternal ſacrifice in Chriſt. 6. I ſhall add, this is the Lords bleſſed end in making out his threatnings againſt his people, that they ſhould not periſh with the world. O! what a bleſt exchange is it, that the flaming

flaming ſword which once ſtood to guard the tree of life, doth now ſtand as it were in the way of the ſaints, to keep them from running into the paths of death.

Having premitted theſe things, I ſhall now inſtance ſome particular evils, wherewith the godly are ready to be overtaken, which the word doth expreſly threaten and hold forth the hazard of, both as to outward and ſpiritual ſtroaks, and give in here the chriſtians witneſs from their experience in all ages of the truth of theſe threatnings.

FIRST *Security, and carnal confidence,* which we find the word doth threaten, is an evil wherewith chriſtians are ready to be overtaken; but they do alſo know by ſad experience, what bitter fruit this brings forth, and that therein the word falleth not to the ground, which is held forth, *Hoſ.* ii. 1. 9. *Hoſ.* vii. 9. *Iſa.* xxx. 16, 17.

1. That a ſecure condition is the uſual forerunner of ſome ſad change, that when they are moſt at eaſe in a dull and dead temper of ſpirit, ſome ſharp rouſing diſpenſation is upon the back of it, either a groſs ſin, or a ſearching croſs, as a thorn in the bed of their ſecurity to put them to their feet. 2. That ſeldom reckoning with the conſcience, the running on of accounts for ſome time upon their hand, doth put their caſe into a ſad confuſion and maketh it a bitter, and burdenſome work to retire alone, or within themſelves, yea, hath a moſt direct tendency to a further hardening, and real giving up of their duty. 3. That when ſecurity, and deadneſs groweth within, it quickly maketh them dry up and wither without, in the external performance of duty, and in that vigorous lively appearance which did formerly luſtre their walk and carriage before others, ſo as very byſtanders may read the languiſhing of grace in the dead exerciſe of their gifts. 4. That going about duty with moſt confidence in themſelves doth uſually give them the moſt clear diſcovery of their weakneſs, yea, when they have leaſt lookt for any croſs, they have then been ſure to meet with it with that ſad addition, of being a ſurprizal in a ſecure condition, whereas on the other hand they may tell, what refreſhing diſappointments they have got where ſome trials have been moſt feared and lookt for. 5. That ſecure ſporting with a temptation may ſoon turn to ſad earneſt, and they have found it very hard to dance about the fire and not be burnt, and the temptation, which at a diſtance ſeemed ſmall, upon a nearer approach, they have found moe bands on their heart, and was another than they could have believed. 6. That the means whereon they have laid moſt weight, they have alſo found, have given them the ſaddeſt diſappointment, the putting of them in Gods room, and out of their own place hath been the way to cauſe them miſcarry, yea, to turn their croſs, whereas they have oft ſeen ſome thing unexpected made the mean of their help, that they might know means are ordered of the Lord, and are uſeful, becauſe he maketh them ſo. 7. Their experience can alſo witneſs that carnal confidence deſpiſing the trial at a diſtance, is uſually puniſhed with carnal diffidence and deſpondency of ſpirit under the ſame, one extremity made the puniſhment of the other, like the hot and cold fits of an ague, which do mutually make one the other more intenſe, yea, that their immoderate confidence and expectation of a thing, hath after reſolved in as immoderate diſcouragement, as their ſtroke.

SECOND, *The chriſtians unwatchfulneſs, and intermitting in the exerciſe of that ſo neceſſary and commanded duty,* we find the word threateneth, and holdeth forth the hazard thereof, *Leſt ye enter into temptation,* the proof thereof their experience can alſo witneſs, *Luke* xxi. 34. 36. *Matth.* xxvi. 41.

1. That it is not eaſy to guide their walk and converſation when their guard over the heart doth ſlacken, but the giving looſe reins for a little may make ſuch a ſad and large breach, that many many days will not eaſily make up, yea they do alſo know, how a ſenſible withdrawing of the ſpirit, and drying up of their life and liberty is the uſual fruit which unwatchfulneſs brings forth. 2. That this helpeth to make their ſun-ſhine ſhort, cauſeth a low ebb after the greateſt enlargement, whilſt they do not guard againſt peculiar evils, and that uſually there doth haunt ſuch a condition, the ſwelling of the fleſh, when the ſpirit is moſt enlarged, which will ſoon put them as far behind, as they formerly thought themſelves at an advantage. 3. That when once the heart lieth open, it is quickly ſeiſed on and made a prey, with what a bitter ſting doth it return, after it hath taken liberty to wander? yea, doth find there is a ſwift progreſs that ſin hath from the thoughts to the rolling of it to the imagination, and thence to the affection, wherewith it is more eaſy to engage, than to ſhake this off. 4. That unwatchfulneſs hath oft turned the moſt ſpecial times and opportunities for advantage to the greateſt loſs which through their neglect of theſe, hath put them further behind than they were, it hath turned their retirement and ſolitude to be their ſnare made the deſert worſe, and more dangerous than the city, and made them find that vain thoughts the following whereof ſeemeth pleaſant to the mouth, will prove gall and wormwood in the belly, there being no ſadder company than a mans ſpirit let looſe upon it ſelf, whilſt they cannot ſtop that current, whereto they had given a vent. 5. Their experience of this can witneſs that unwatchfulneſs hath an undoubted tendency to caſt off prayer, how hard is it in the evening to retire to God, whilſt the heart is abroad all the day? To be religious in worſhip, when men are not ſo in their walk? Yea they do find that this will bring their diſtemper within out at doors to ſome diſorder, impertinency, or paſſion in their words or outward communication, a thing which experience may tell doth wound the ſoul, make a ſad breach in their peace, and doth quickly overcloud the ſpirit, and unfit them for communion with God and going about of ſpiritual duties.

THIRD, *To reſtrain prayer, and neglect calling on God is an evil alſo which the word doth threaten,* and hold forth the ſame hazard thereof, as of unwatchfulneſs, *leſt ye enter into temptation,* yea, that this is even a ſtep to the caſting off fear, the chriſtians experience, from frequent trial can witneſs, that this ſcripture threatning is true, *Matth.* xxvi. 41. *Job* xv. 4.

1. That they have found this the riſe, which giveth life and increaſe to their prevailing evils, and that corruption then is upon a ſenſible growth, as the lively exerciſe of prayer begins to be intermitted. 2. That this weareth out their ſpiritual life and bringeth a conſumption upon the vital ſpirits of chriſtianity, ſo that theſe who ſometime flouriſhed and kept green, as by the ſcent of water, that correſpondence which they had with the fountain of their life, while his dew did lye all night on their branches, hath through neglect of prayer been brought to a poor ſhadow; ſo although ſometimes the greatneſs of their loſe and diſtemper hath been hid from themſelves, yet, might be eaſily diſcerned by on-lookers. 3. That wearing out of prayer and of delight therein will quickly make them diſreliſh any other part of religion, put them out of frame to meditate, or to give thanks, or entertain fellowſhip with the ſaints, yea, the more lively and ſpiritual theſe are, it maketh them the more burden and torment to them. 4. That wearing out of this is a ſtrong temptation to a further forbearance, and will ſenſibly wear them out of any ſenſe of their need thereof, and make them ſtrangers to themſelves and to their own caſe, ſo that they ſhall find, the leſs they are in this exerciſe,

the further they ſhall be indiſpoſed and the fewer errands they have, the leſs felt neceſſity of the ſame. 5. Their experience can alſo witneſs that little prayer maketh a heavy burden, doth multiply their ſtraits and cauſe their care grow as this is abated; they muſt then bear their burden alone, and with heavineſs take counſel within themſelves, while they ply not this bleſt tried remedy to make their requeſts in all things known to God.

FOURTH. *We find the word doth threaten defection from the truth*, and turning from the way of God in a time of trial, as an evil into which theſe that are kept by grace from final apoſtaſie may yet through the violence of a temptation fall, *Jer.* ix. 13. 15. *Pſal.* lxxxix. 30, 32. *Joſ.* viii. 11. and their ſad experience can witneſs, the truth of the ſcripture threatnings concerning this alſo, while they have found.

1. That in one day they may adventure on that, which through moſt of their life they have not got above it, but hath made them go with their back bowed down to the grave; that there giving the Lords work a wrong touch is one of theſe things which doth ſcarcely leave them all their time, but, beyond other ſins they have found this ſtill come up with a bitter and heavy reflection, yea, in the evening of their life they have found this ſo ſore on their ſpirit, that it could not lye hid or ſilent but were forced to witneſs their ſenſe of it before the world, er'e they could get to any eaſe. 2. That this the Lord doth uſually meet with ſome ſharp and publick reproof even before men, that though he pardon his people, yea, give ſome ſenſible intimation thereof to their ſouls, yet, he hath not paſt them, as to ſome viſible mark of his diſpleaſure, becauſe of ſuch a thing. 3. They ſee that a crooked and uncleanly way proves not the means of extricating them out of trouble, but their ſtraits have been made to grow therewith, yea they have found that which they eſhewed in God's way, hath more ſadly met them in another rod, and that there is a thick dreg in the bottom of the cup, which maketh it worſe to drink thereof at the cloſe, than at the beginning. 4. That it is not eaſy to make a ſtand in turning aſide from the way of God, when once they are engaged, a retrograd motion is very violent, and yielding in a little will bring with it ſome neceſſity of going further, as a *judicial* ſtroke. 5. That neglecting of ſome clear opportunity, to give a teſtimony for the truth, when called thereto, hath turned to be their judgement, that they ſhould not have further acceſs or be made uſeful that way; a thing truly obvious to ſuch, as are wiſe to obſerve the judgements of God in their time; yea, likewiſe that publick back-ſliding, doth oft viſibly wear men out of perſonal tenderneſs.

FIFTH. *Unſubduedneſs of ſpirit, and want of mortification to outward things, the word doth clearly threaten*, and hold forth its hazard, the accompliſhment whereof chriſtians experience can witneſs, *Rom.* viii. 6, 7.

1. That God hath oft turned their idol to be their croſs, put a mark of his jealouſy on their deareſt things, when once they put them in his room, yea, frequent obſervation of the Lord's way both with themſelves and others doth ſhew, if they would be rid of a thing, they may ſet their heart immoderately on it, ſuch eagerneſs and exorbitancy of affection being a ſure preſage, it ſhall either be their judgement or ſorrow or ceaſe to be. 2. That outward things did never yield leſs than whilſt they preſt them moſt, that when they are eager in purſuit of the world, and ſatisfaction there, their ſpirits are ſenſibly hurried with many perturbations, ſo that they muſt ſay, that which keepeth them from enjoying of God doth alſo hinder the comfortable enjoying of themſelves. 3. They have found that ſlow advance in the work of mortification, hath at laſt doubled their ſmart, and been the concurring cauſe of ſome very ſharp cure, when the diſeaſe did come to that height,

height, that a ſmall and ordinary potion could not do the turn. 4. That immoderate deſire, and preſſing after an outward thing, they have ſometime got anſwered, but therewith a ſharp reproof from the Lord, yea, uſually have found ſmall ſatisfaction in their enjoying that, about which they were ſo intent in their purſuit, *give children, or elſe I dye*, ſaid *Rachel*, ſhe got children and ſhe dyed in bringing one of them forth. 5. Their experience can alſo witneſs how overcaring anxiety hath oft cauſed things thrive worſe under their care, whilſt they found never a more ſatisfying iſſue in a particular, than by a quiet, ſubmiſſive dependence on the Lord for the ſame.

SIXTH. *The doing violence to light, and ſinning with a witneſs againſt the conſcience*, as it is clearly threatned in the word, ſo likewiſe the ſad effects thereof hath been clearly witneſſed, in all ages, *Prov.* xxix. 1. *Pſal.* lxxxi. 11. 12.

1. What a direct tendency this hath to the further darkning of their light, and to a judicial hardening, and that reproofs not entertained do uſually become leſs frequent, yea, leſs pungent and ſearching; their heart then doth not ſo eaſily ſmite them, and put the tear in their eye, as ſometimes a word, or ſecret rebuke of the conſcience would have done, ſo as they can now digeſt greater things, who would ſometimes have ſtood at that, which comparatively was very ſmall. 2. That when they would not read their boſom diſtemper, which both by the word and conſcience was pointed out, others have got leave to read the ſame written on their forehead, the ſhifting of diſcovered guilt, and of all ſerious endeavour to get the quarrel taken away in ſecret betwixt God and them, hath brought the matter at laſt, to ſome publick hearing, even before the world. 3. That their darkening of their light upon ſome private intereſt, while they would again and again enquire if ſuch a thing be warrantable, concerning which the Lord had once cleared their mind, is a moſt perilous thing, yea hath got an anſwer according to the idol of their heart, and their choice made to be their judgment. I ſhall but add what bitter and ſad experience can tell, how dreadful it is to give the conſcience a thruſt which is more eaſily hurt than healed, that deliberate adventuring on the occaſion of temptation, when they would go to the high prieſt's hall without warrant, or a calling, hath coſt them dear; and they have found that bold ſinning doth afterward make faint believing.

(¶) I know it is by the ſerious and experienced chriſtians, and by theſe only, this argument in the meaning thereof can be reached, and it is ſure, ſuch will not debate the ſame, who know the truth and have it dwelling in them, and on another ground than report are eſtabliſhed in its certainty; for theſe can witneſs what ſweet comforting hours they have had with Jeſus Chriſt in a ſad uncomfortable time, that he hath both ſpoken, and himſelf alſo hath done it, and muſt therefore ſeal his word and the truth thereof, becauſe he hath ſealed it on their heart; yea, do ſo ſurely know, it is God who worketh all their works in them, that with their laſt words and dying breath, they have confidence to aſſert this, and commend that excellent ſtudy of godlineſs to others.

I know that with a great many of the world, this grave convincing argument of experience hath no weight, for ſtrangers intermedle not with that joy, and therefore fancy it a pure fiction, as the only expedient and preſervative to their heart, from the horror and inexpreſſible torment, which muſt ſeaſe on them, if the certainty and neceſſity of godlineſs were granted, theſe ſcoff at this excellent thing, as ſome vain conceit or diſtemper; becauſe they would have it ſo. But with ſuch, I muſt here crave a ſerious and free communing, yea in ſo great and concerning a buſineſs muſt obteſt they would not

ſhut their eyes, but allow reaſon that room, they would do in any other caſe; O what do you alledge, on what ground do you reject this great witneſs of experience? If you deny it, becauſe you have not found it, do not others aſſert this, becauſe they ſurely know it? And their aſſertion hath theſe two advantages, one, that they once had the ſame ſentiment and opinion with you, which now they reflect on with much horror. 2. The reality of its effects on them proves, both the reality of the cauſe, and the excellency thereof; and now if theſe be indeed ſerious, and their teſtimony true whom you thus challenge, are you not in a ſad and dreadful caſe; ſince you cannot think to lodge together at night, or that your intereſt and theirs will meet in another world, which hath been ſo very oppoſite here by the way; you muſt ſurely part with theſe at death, and land at ſome other port, to whom all your life you have walked ſo croſs: O ſit but with your ſelves alone, and conſider this, you hate ſerious religion, and therefore you reproach it; will you take ſuch a revenge on your ſelves, and out of prejudice to it, run on ſo great and eternal a ruin? But know aſſuredly, it is not what you judged, and if once you paſs in this deluſion that great and laſt ſtep betwixt time and eternity, you are undone, oh undone for ever! And ſure if you admit the authority of this Scripture, you cannot debate the chriſtians experience, while there you have ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, who bear that ſame teſtimony, but it is on your ſelf you muſt reflect, not on the truth, that you know ſo little in this way.

Now to leave ſome conviction on the atheiſts of this time, and theſe who take liberty to ſcoff at ſerious religion, I would here offer ſome rational grounds, which even to the world and byſtanders may convincingly demonſtrate, if they would but conſider the ſame in earneſt, that this teſtimony the ſaints do in all ages bear, from their experience, to the truths, can be no cunning device or falſhood, but is moſt certain and true; for,

1. That muſt be a ſure teſtimony, and is no cheat, if you judge theſe who declare the ſame have the ſenſe of a deity and have any truth, or moral candour, for it is a clear *dilemma*, either ſuch, whoſe witneſs this is, are impoſtors of the higheſt degree, yea in atheiſm and groſs deceit muſt exceed all the world beſide, or, it is true and valid what they witneſs; now for the firſt, I ſhall crave no more in their behalf, but an appeal to your conſcience and ſober thoughts, if you could judge thus. 2. This teſtimony muſt be ſure, if you but allow theſe the uſe of judgment and reaſon who bear it, and do not judge them wholly demented; for it were a ſtrange and unheard madneſs, that men would purſue a ſhadow, with ſo great ſeriouſneſs, and on this intereſt venture ſo far, if religion and the power thereof were not a reality; ſure one of theſe two muſt hold, if chriſtians do not experience themſelves, what they hold out to others, that they are either in the higheſt meaſure profligate and wicked, even beyond the ordinary rate and depravation of humane nature, or, they muſt be under a ſtrange madneſs and *delirium*; they muſt either deſign to cheat the world, or themſelves; but though their adverſaries could wiſh to have it ſo, I think their malice will not make them ſo mad, as to own that challenge, and ſince theſe cannot be alledged, I profeſs were I the greateſt atheiſt who did not own the ſcripture, I could not ſeriouſly conſider the way, and walk of ſuch who are ſerious chriſtians without aſtoniſhment, or conceive how in ſuch a world, and at ſo many viſible diſadvantages, they ſhould be thus engaged, on any other conſideration, than the truth and reality of chriſtianity. 3. Do you not ſee, this is their teſtimony, who are willing to be tried therein, and render a reaſon of that hope which is in

them? yea, do in this offer themſelves to trial, and with greateſt ſerioufneſs obteſt the world, not to credit implicitly their witneſs, and take it on truſt, but themſelves put it to the moſt exact inquiry and ſearch, and truly if there be an appeal and reference to mens ſenſe and feeling, which can admit no debate, I know not what acceſs they have to queſtion this witneſs, until they firſt put it to an eſſay, that from their own experience, they could contradict the ſame. 4. Should you not admit this for a ſure teſtimony, if you grant any moral certainty of a thing, that there is ſome caſe wherein a human teſtimony can allow no debate, which in this preſent caſe muſt be undeniable; for you know by two witneſſes a matter is judicially eſtabliſhed: but is it not more confirming when they are of known judgment and integrity? yea out of diverſe and remote places of the earth, and otherways ſtrangers amongſt themſelves, but yet more, not only when dying they own and aſſert this, but are willing to dye upon a teſtimony thereto, and ſeal it with their blood, and this alſo through all ages renewed; O what can be more convincing as to moral certainty? Now I do atteſt the world if this argument of chriſtian experience hath not full and unanſwerable proofs of it's certainty. 5. This witneſs can be no counterfeit, and you muſt judge they are worthy of credit, to verify the ſcripture from experience, on whoſe practice you ſee it ſo convincingly tranſcribed, ſhould not the declaration of ſuch concerning the truth of the promiſe, have much weight whilſt you ſee what a ſerious reſpect theſe have to the rule, to have their walk ordered in that way, where the ſcripture warrands them to expect the fulfilling of the promiſe; and are not theſe ſeen to be the moſt tender ſerious chriſtians, whoſe way uſeth to have greateſt authority over your conſcience, who do moſt own this witneſs, and hath the largeſt account to give thereof. 6. Is not this their teſtimony alſo, whom on your exacteſt and narroweſt notice, you may ſee ſtudy religion, in the ſecret and retired duties thereof? where ſome other intereſt than the obſervation of men muſt be an incitement; yea, may you not obſerve there are ſuch, who do ſeriouſly own the practice of theſe duties when the view of theſe about them, might be a greater lett, and ground of fear, than any perſwading motive? And whilſt you challenge the light profeſſion of many within the church, do but alſo ask your conſcience if there be not ſuch, whoſe way you muſt juſtify, even over the belly of your hatred and prejudice againſt them, that it hath a convincing ſavour of humility? yea, their growth under the ground, and being ſerious and real in what they profeſs may be clearly diſcerned from a naked and empty ſhew. 7. Can theſe intend by ſuch a teſtimony to deceive others; who have oft been in ſo great fear and diſquiet, that they be not themſelves deceived? O how convincing may this be to the world to conſider what perplexing queries, and doubts chriſtians have ſometime about their own inward caſe, yea after ſuch ſharp wreſtlings a moſt ſweet calm and compoſure of ſpirit may be diſcerned; it is ſtrange this puts not atheiſts to a more ſerious inquiry, what ſuch changes can mean, which will make men differ ſo far from themſelves, whilſt no outward cauſe can be diſcerned; it is true ſome matters lye much under ground, the heart knows its own bitterneſs, and a ſtranger doth not intermedle with its joy, yea, the deepeſt plunge and exerciſe make little noiſe without, yet this is ſure, there is ſo much under theſe viciſſitudes, that is obvious even to the view of onlookers as may leave ſome conviction, their enjoyments muſt be true and real when the want thereof is ſo ſenſibly felt, and the world is not ſo ſtupidly inadvertent, not to obſerve this, if they did not ſhut their eyes for fear of ſuch a diſcovery. 8. Should not their teſtimony be very convincing whoſe complaints and accuſations you may find more at home upon themſelves,

ſelves, than againſt others, who are oft bemoaning over theſe evils which the eyes of man could not reach; may not the world ſee how ſome are preſt with anguiſh of ſoul to the waſting of their body when no cauſe from without is known, and otherwiſe rational and moſt compoſed; yea, may it not ſometimes be diſcerned there is more ſmothered within, which gets no vent, than appears without? for grief in earneſt wants not ſome peculiar marks, by which it may be witneſſed to others, I think this ſhould put the world to ſuch a reflection, there muſt be ſome grief and joy and a cauſe for it, which goes above the world or the things thereof. 9. This is their teſtimony, whoſe confidence and compoſure of ſpirit in the greateſt exigencies may witneſs to others that perſwaſion they have of the truth within their ſouls; you ſee alſo at what labour and work theſe are in the duties of religion; yea, when they are moſt ſerious, how native and unconſtrained their motions are; O doth not this ſhow the grace of God, and a new nature is another thing than words, and that they muſt ſurely find ſatisfaction in theſe duties which makes it to them a ſpecial delight and pleaſure, which you would reckon an intolerable and ſore toyle. 10. Do you not ſee how theſe agree every where and at every time anent this teſtimony, that the ſcripture is verified by experience, and the breathings and influences of God on the ſoul meets them in the way of duty according to the promiſe, even whilſt they remarkably differ amongſt themſelves in their natural temper and diſpoſition; and is it not known whatever particular and leſſer difference, through the prevalence of corruption, are too frequent amongſt theſe, yet no accuſation, no reflection on the truth in reality of godlineſs in it ſelf will be found when their challenges are moſt bitter one upon another; I muſt further atteſt your conſcience, whilſt you have heard the ſad regret of dying chriſtians about the intereſt of their ſoul and ſhort coming in the ſtudy of godlineſs, have not theſe complaints been ſtill to commend religion, and the excellency thereof, and reflect only upon themſelves; but none ever was heard to have ſuch a complaint, that they did cheat the world in that matter, by obtruding upon them a falſhood. 11. May you not ſee this teſtimony which chriſtians give to the way of godlineſs, that it is from theſe who act deliberately in that great intereſt, and have a rational account to give of the grounds on which they walk, and do you not find they are men as well as chriſtians, that none are more friends to reaſon and the right exerciſe thereof, than ſuch who are moſt ſerious in the ſtudy of religion; it is ſure could the world have their ſight, and with *Moſes* ſuch a look of an inviſible God, it would be eaſy for them to be of their judgment alſo. 12. That you are ſo ready to chalenge the chriſtians teſtimony, may you not find the true cauſe within your ſelf; not from your judgment, but a rooted prejudice and enmity at the way of the Lord, whereof you can give no reaſon; yea, have you not oft reproached chriſtians at a diſtance, whom upon a more near particular acquaintance, you have from ſome irreſiſtible conviction left upon you, been forced to juſtify? For godlineſs hath this ſingular advantage to ſilence all its adverſaries that none will challenge or reproach the ſame, but theſe who never knew it, and ſhould ſuch a witneſs be admitted? O ſtrange with what liberty men can deride this, who yet dare not go alone to have ſome ſerious thoughts about it. 13. I know you will not deny there is ſuch a thing as hypocriſy and a falſe ſhew of godlineſs, yet ſure you have no ground of challenge, or to queſtion the truth and power of this, which is ſo convincingly witneſſed to, even by hypocriſy; for there ſhould be no uſe for ſuch a cover, no cauſe for that impoſture, if there were not alſo a truth, and reality therein; you cannot conceive a counterfeit, but as it ſtands related to that which is true; if there were not ſuch a thing as ſerious godli-

neſs,

neſs, the world could never have known how to perſonate it; could there be a lye, if there were not a truth? You ſee alſo that it is the moſt ſerious diſcerning chriſtians; ſuch uſually do fear, and have an awful regard of, for which there were no ground, if they were not conſcious of the truth of that in others, whereof they only ſtudy the appearance, yea, here I muſt alſo appeal to the world and ordinary onlookers, if there be not, even to them, ſome diſcernible difference betwixt the power of religion, and an empty ſhew, (though this make greater noiſe) betwixt thoſe who are ſerious and tender in following the Lord, and others who glory in appearance, but not in heart; for the one by a convincing manifeſtation of the truth does commend it ſelf to mens conſcience, hath a living air and breath, which by no art or cunning can be drawn to the life, no more than an exquiſite painter with the choiceſt colours in drawing a man upon a board can therewith draw the vital acts of breathing and moving. 14. May you not ſee holineſs muſt be ſome excellent thing, which hath ſuch credit, even with it's real adverſaries, and the worſt of men, to make them graſp at the appearance and ſhadow of that, which others know, they hate the power and practice of; and here I would ask the world, is it not to the ſcripture and truth thereof, the experience of the ſaints bears witneſs, that they do indeed feel and prove within their ſoul, what you ſee written before you, in this bleſſed record, but is it not alſo ſure, that nothing is more directly croſs and oppoſite to the ſcripture, than a falſe appearance and ſhew of that, which is not real? 15. Can you debate, there are ſuch chriſtians in the world, many ſuch whoſe experience does witneſs the truth of religion, of whom it muſt be ſaid (even their enemies being judges) their being ſerious in that way, and choice thereof, muſt be for it ſelf, and hath no outward deſign or intereſt, to which it can be ſubſervient; whilſt in this oft they run the greateſt hazard and are rendred a prey to others? O muſt it not be a marvelous thing, which hath that dominion over the ſouls, to teach men the practice of ſelf-denial, not only to a quiet, but a chearful quitting their intereſt, to ſmile on the ſpoilers, to rejoyce in their ſuffering and reproaches, to forgive wrongs, and take revenge by good will; this is indeed above nature, and is only peculiar to chriſtianity, which can alſo turn poiſon to an antidote and cure, and gain by its greateſt loſſes. 16. You may ſee what different ſizes are amongſt the ſaints, how great a difference alſo betwixt the experiences of one and another; ſome made to witneſs much bitterneſs in departing from God, and others that ſingular advantage in drawing near to him, yea, how near ſometimes will great extremes in their condition, border with other; at a ſtrait to expreſs their joy, who not long before would have thought a vent to their grief a ſpecial caſe; O muſt not this be a matter of earneſt, and when you ſee how much theſe amongſt themſelves do thus differ, that yet all theſe differences meet together, and concur in a moſt clear teſtimony to the ſcripture, and truth of godlineſs; yea, how this wonderful contrivance of the ſcripture is ſuted to anſwer all this variety of changes in the chriſtians caſe, and paſſeth none over. But oh, what can be ſaid here where weeping ſhould be more fit than words, to ſee what contempt the great part of men puts on ſerious religion, which doth truly raiſe them above the condition of the beaſts; is not the atheiſm of the time at that height that we muſt ſay the aſſault of the adverſary is not ſo much at one ſingle truth, as at the root and being of all religion? and truly we may fear ſome extraordinary cure to recover this generation of a diſeaſe, that would ſeem in an ordinary way incurable; I ſhall but further offer theſe few queries, and plead ſo far with the adverſary, that they would er'e they paſs them have but ſome thoughts thereon.

1. If there be a God, or a truth in any religion, is it not with this bleſſed record of the ſcripture you muſt cloſe as the alone rule thereof? Yea, if your judgment and conſcience be not both extinct, muſt you not conſent to the law and doctrine therein held forth, that it is good, what ever be your averſion therefrom? 2. Is not an immortal ſoul, and a being for ever ſuch a venture as is of more value, and ſhould be to you, than the whole world? 3. O can you be thus undetermined about ſo great an intereſt, you ſeem to be heſitant and unſure if there be an other world, a heaven, or a hell, but oh, are you ſure theſe are not, and how then can you be ſecured from ſuch a fear, which of all fears is the greateſt? 4. What a horrid and uncomfortable thing is it to be an atheiſt, which gives men no hope beyond this preſent life? Yea, what a world would this be to dwell in, if there were no true godlineſs in it, ſince without this, no comfortable human ſociety, no kindly and right ſubjection to the magiſtrate can be expected from theſe, who have no tye from above, and knows not what it is to pay homage to a ſoveraign being. 5. Is not the native tendency of atheiſm to all ungodlineſs in mens practice, yea, how far doth it debaſe human nature and levels it, even with the beaſts. 6. Whilſt you ſcoff at ſerious religion, I dare appeal to your ſelves, if in your retirements, when you have any ſober reflections, you are not forced to have other thoughts; and why is it, you ſo much fear to go alone, and be in any meaſure ſerious with your ſoul; oh what a deſperate ſecurity is that? I ſhall only add, is it not rare to find a profeſſed atheiſt at death, when once the approach of another world does awake the ſenſe of a Deity? but then it is eaſie to ſee men, who have ſported at godlineſs in their life, weep over that wretched mirth, when it comes to death, and call for ſuch miniſters, whom once they hated; and oh, what a dreadful cure will hell be of atheiſm, for there they know the truth in earneſt, though it be their terror; it is alſo ſure the devil is no atheiſt, who believes there is a God and trembles.

I muſt yet a little further crave liberty e'er I paſs this argument, to ſpeak aword, even to theſe, who know and have experienced the ſame; O how great ſhould this be in our eyes, and with what aſtoniſhment may we conſider it? which by ſo full, ſo ſatisfying a demonſtration doth witneſs, not to the eye, or ear, but to the ſoul, the certainty of divine truth and the power and reality of godlineſs, ſhould we not think, if but one, in an age, or that every particular chriſtian were but once at ſome ſolemn time of his life thus confirmed, that he could ſay, then did he taſte and ſee the word, and found it ſurely verified on his ſoul, as ſure as he knoweth that he lives, at what a rate would he value and preſerve ſo ſingular a ſeal and confirmation of the truth, yea, keep up the remembrance of ſuch a ſpecial time whilſt he lived? but oh, muſt it be ſaid that this grave witneſs this clear demonſtration of the ſcripture, and of the certainty of the words of truth, which we have by experience doth loſe its weight, and the ineſtimable value thereof leſs regarded, that it is the chriſtians daily bread? O what a reach hath this argument; what great things are there held forth? I think a ſerious look of the ſame, if it were brought near to us, might put us to queſtion, whether we believe the ſame or not; are we in a dream or awake; and ſees them with our eyes which this doth ſo convincingly demonſtrate; whilſt we can ſo eaſily paſs them with ſo little weight thereof on our ſpirit; now to hold that forth, let us but bring near this argument, and gravely conſider the ſame with reſpect to ſome of theſe great truths, which by this unanſwerable demonſtration of experience are witneſſed: I muſt ſay, ſuch truths that we may wonder how men can ſo eaſily admit their being

true, and in ſo ordinary a way look thereon, without wondering and aſtoniſhment.

I. Doth not this argument of experience by a very clear demonſtration witneſs that great truth of a *God-head*, whereon the whole ſuperſtructure of truth and godlineſs doth ſtand? yea, in another manner does enforce on men the perſwaſion of this by a more near and convincing diſcovery, than the greateſt works of God, or theſe glorious appearances of his power and wiſdom in the heavens, and earth do; it is true, theſe bring him near to our eye and ear; but O this brings the bleſſed and inviſible God nearer, into the heart and ſoul, that we may both taſte and ſee, that ſurely he is, and is that which in the ſcripture he is declared to be; it is not the contemplation of nature in its higheſt flight can anſwer ſuch an aſſault of the devil, which may overtake the moſt eſtabliſhed chriſtian about the being of God; but there is a demonſtration within which goes further than the judgment, and paſſeth natural underſtanding, whence we feel, we taſte, we enjoy, yea, his voice is heard in the ſoul which we ſurely know to be his, and this is the reach and import of this argument: there is indeed cauſe to wonder at the atheiſm of this world, ſince men can look no where, without ſome witneſs of a Deity to ſtare them in the face; but oh, there is a more refined atheiſm that lyes in the boſom of a profeſſed aſſent to divine truth, and is not eaſily diſcerned, though not the leſs dreadful that it goes under a cover not only from the view of others, but even from a man's ſelf; I would here offer ſome things which do witneſs a ſpecial advantage the godly man is at, thereby to believe, and to be more throughly perſuaded of the glorious being of God. 1. That he finds the believing of this is a very great thing, and not ſo eaſy to reach as the world do ſuppoſe, for it is no ſmall matter even to attain this; Oh, what ordinary thoughts have many about it, who think it eaſy to paſs an aſſent to this marvelous truth, becauſe they never conſidered the greatneſs thereof; but it is ſure, the more ſerious and grave a chriſtian is, it will give him the more work, and we may find theſe uſually are more plunged and exerciſed about this, than others. 2. It is a great advantage, when this is ſo far mens ſerious ſtudy, as to be upon an inquiry after a further eſtabliſhment in ſo great a truth; O what another ſight of the inviſible God? What a ſatisfying perſwaſion of his bleſſed being might we have, if our ſoul were indeed herein exerciſed; and knew but how little we know and have reached in this, that there is a nearer approach to God, which ſhould ſhew us the faith of a Deity is ſomething beyond theſe former thoughts we have had thereof, we loſe many ſingular confirmations conſerning this, becauſe we do not in earneſt look after them. 3. They are at a ſpecial advantage to whom believing of this truth, (O bleſſed truth, *that God is*) is their exceeding joy, and amidſt their heavineſs can ſay, the thought and meditation of him is ſweet, that when through a variety of temptations they are ready to faint, this reſtoreth their ſoul, yea, will cauſe it leap within for joy, and is their *enough* when other encouragements are furtheſt off, that *God lives:* O what a thing is it in ſuch a world, and in ſome deep perplexing plunge, to know the Lord is God, whom he hath now for a rock and a ſhield, and in the cloſe of time for his exceeding great reward; can we have ſome ſerious thought of this, and ſo eaſily turn our ſelves to other things without aſtoniſhment, yea, is it not ſtrange there ſhould be oft ſo near and immediate a bordering betwixt our thoughts of the glorious God and the meaneſt triffle. 4. It is no ſmall advantage where men can open the *Bible* and retire into it, under the ſenſe and impreſſion of a Godhead, and that near correſpondence he hath this way with

his

his people, on whoſe ſoul theſe words hath awe and authority, *Thus ſaith the Lord*, yea, have that repoſe upon his teſtimony and promiſe, which the ſolid perſwaſion of his being and faithfulneſs ſhould cauſe. 5. They have come a great length here, who in their ordinary walk, are under ſome deep impreſſion of this that God is near, who knows of their ſitting down and riſing up, from whoſe ſight they cannot ſhift one thought, yea, that on him they have ſuch an abſolute dependance, that without him they can not draw their breath; O where this is believed muſt it not cauſe both fear and wondering?

II. Is not this an argument which by a ſure and unanſwerable demonſtration does witneſs the truth and reality of grace, that there is ſuch a thing, and is no empty ſound, which doth raiſe man above the natural ſtate of men, as far as reaſon puts him above the ſtate of the beaſt, it is truly ſtrange this ſhould be believed, and yet is not more marvelous in our eyes, how we can be at ſuch reſt whilſt one of theſe two lies under debate, the reality of grace or our being really intereſted therein; O is there not cauſe of aſtoniſhment that ſuch a product of heaven ſhould be found in the earth, whoſe deſcent and original is ſo clearly demonſtrated by its breathing upwards after God, its native tendency and motion towards him, whence it came? Surely grace is a great ſubject to think on, and that it is not ſo in our eyes, it muſt be either we do not believe it, or do not conſider what a change it makes on the ſoul, which is no tranſient diſpoſition, but the ſeed of God that remains, is not this ſuch a thing as makes ſpring in the winter, cauſeth men grow under their greateſt weights? that lifts the ſoul up from the clay, yea does by bringing it low in its own eyes, raiſe it nearer God, this makes a man to have another appearance, on which the world is forced to look with ſome aſtoniſhment, one chriſtian doth admire this in another, and the more it ſhews it ſelf, it cauſeth a more near approach betwixt their ſouls; it will cauſe fear in them who hate it; and hath a power even over its perſecutors; now it is the truth and reality of this excellent thing, that this argument does witneſs; yea ſuch a witneſs that can admit no debate, where experience makes it ſure: I confeſs a ſerious look and perſwaſion of this might make the chriſtians life a continued wonder, that there is ſuch a thing, which by a marvelous ſurpriſal did prevent him when he was not aware, hath entred him into a new world, and tranſlated him from a ſtate of darkneſs unto a marvelous light, cauſeth the ſoul breath in another air, brings him ſo near that ſtate of the angels, ſubdues the will without violence, and ſubjects it with its own conſent; yea, by ſo ſtrait a tye is link'd with an eternal glory in bleſſedneſs. Surely this is one of the moſt ſtately pieces of the work of God, that exceeds the whole ſtructure of the univerſe; O with what aſtoniſhment ſhould we look on this marvelous thing, if we could conſider the whole frame and ſtructure of the grace of God in a chriſtian, and there make as it were a diſſection in its ſeveral parts and proportions, its decay and languiſhing, theſe different changes and ſizes, its vigorous actings and abatements thereof, how it breaths, is nouriſhed, how it is kept green and preſerved by a continued intercourſe with the fountain of its being: and lo, whilſt we conſider this great wonder, both in the whole and in its parts, we may ſee how in theſe it does moſt exactly anſwer that model we have thereof in the ſcripture of God.

III. This is a great argument, and ſhould be ſo in our eyes, which does not only witneſs the reality of grace in its acting and exerciſe, which in this former ſection is ſpecially pointed at; but does unanſwerably demonſtrate a

ſpiritual life and *being*, which the chriſtian knows and is perſuaded thereof, as he is ſure he breaths and hath a natural life: O what a marvelous demonſtration is this, wherein ſenſe and feeling doth in as certain a way concurre, as in any diſcovery we have by our outward ſenſes, that there is a new life and another being beſides that we have by nature, which anſwers to a new birth; yea, an other breathing and acting that is alſo ſuted thereto; but oh, can it be ſaid, we believe and know it is aſſuredly true, who have ſuch common and paſſing thoughts thereof, and does not conſider what it is whereof we are ſure. 1. That this is ſo great a thing, it may indeed cauſe wonder to think we are men, and that we have a rational being, but O a ſpiritual life is another cauſe for wondering, which comes not by our birth, hath no natural cauſes, yet a life that hath it's proper operation, and vital acts put forth, as truly as theſe natural actions of breathing and moving are put forth by a living man: O life that hath in as ſenſible a way quickning and refreſhing influences, as the earth or bodies of men, knows the influences of the heavens; which hath a pleaſure and delight peculiar to its nature, that hath no affinity with things we enjoy by the ſenſes, but is a pleaſure does far exceed the ſame, and is this a ſmall matter to be perſwaded? 2. What a demonſtration is it which doth witneſs even to our ſenſe and feeling a power on the ſoul by the word, above the moſt perſuaſive words of man, and above all moral influences, by which men are not only reached, but transform'd into the ſame image, whence the chriſtian knows, and knows aſſuredly, theſe great truths the ſealing, witneſſing, teaching, comforting of the ſpirit, *&c.* are no matter of words, or ſome ſtrange deviſed names, but are undoubted realities acted and verified on the ſoul. 3. If this demonſtration of a ſpiritual life be ſure, have we not this alſo, an eternal life and being with God put beyond debate, for if we be certain of the one, O, is not this undeniable that this noble being of the new creature, this life that is here begun, muſt have a more fulgrowth and be at the furtheſt ſtature of the man in Chriſt, when we now ſee it with our eyes in it's infancy, and upon a growing advance towards the ſame, for the one is ſurely as demonſtrative of the other, as a young child which we ſee in a growing tendency towards a man, doth ſhew there is a man in his furtheſt growth. 4. If we aſſuredly know this ſpiritual life, muſt we not alſo admit the undoubted truth of ſpiritual beings, and of an inviſible world, with which this life hath it's correſpondence, yea thus as by a ſtream be led up to the true fountain to know an inviſible God.

IV. How great an *argument* is this, which gives us ſuch a demonſtration that heaven is not altogether deferred until we be there, but that ſuch a thing is ſure, as the real preſence of the glorious God, and a near familiar approach of him to the ſoul, which is here as realy felt and enjoyed, as we can be ſure of any thing; O how marvelous ſhould this be to us! I cannot doubt but the report hereof does ſometime dazle the world with amazement, and puts the groſſeſt of men to ſtrange thoughts; but oh, may not this cauſe them queſtion it's reality whether theſe who bear ſuch a witneſs, do truly feel and enjoy the ſame, who by their way and appearance do ſo little declare any deep impreſſion, that this hath on them; I have ſometimes thought ſtrange how men are taken, even in a kind of tranſport with the diſcovery of ſome rare experiment and demonſtration in nature, which could make that poor man cry out εὕρηκα as though therewith he had gained the whole earth: but O here is another kind of demonſtration, of a more tranſcendent value and intereſt! to know and be ſure of this near approach and intercourſe betwixt God and the ſoul; that even with men in the earth he will verily dwell,

and

and have ſo real a converſe; this does indeed riſe above *Archimedes*'s reach, and ſuch who ever follow'd the ſearch of nature in their moſt exact and ſubtile inquiry; O bleſſed ſouls who have found it! for they have found a treaſure; the thoughts whereof may make it a new thing every day, and make them conſider this with a renewed wondering, to know, there is not only a claim and title to the inheritance above, but that the firſt fruits and earneſt thereof is got here; that as ſurely as there is a real and immediate converſe betwixt men, they have found ſuch a near immediate fellowſhip with God, that all the words of the world cannot expreſs; ſuch a meeting betwixt him and them, where their ſoul hath been drawn out with deſire, where they have found a breaking up of the day with an aſtoniſhing brightneſs, after a moſt cloudy and dark night; O is not this a great thing! have they not cauſe both for joy and wondring who have fallen on ſuch an experiment that they can ſay, and not from report, I do ſurely feel, I enjoy, I am perſwaded this is the Lord, and thus have come forth from him with ſuch a change on their ſoul, and compoſure of mind, that even by-ſtanders might ſee where they have been; now this is the chriſtian's witneſs, which all who are ſerious in the way of the Lord can in ſome meaſure bear, that in a way no leſs ſure and demonſtrative than any thing here beneath can be known, they have had ſuch a diſcovery, and now theſe ſtrange ſcripture truths, the meaning whereof once they could not know, ſuch as, their ſoul melting within at the voice of their beloved, to have his name as ointment poured forth, and be brought near to ſee his face with joy, they know well that they are as truly verified on the heart, as they are written before their eyes in the word; I ſhall but add, it is a very great thing theſe know, who know aſſuredly the real preſence of God here, for thus they are made ſure that he is, as one may know the ſun, becauſe of it's warming heat, and when they ſee it with it's own light, thus they are confirmed of the truth of the ſcripture, whilſt they ſee and feel one of the moſt marvelous things therein verified.

V. This is an *argument* does clearly witneſs a truth and reality in *prayer*, which may be called one of the great wonders of religion, that ſuch a way is, wherein there is ſo near, ſo immediate an addreſs to the majeſty of God in all our concernments, is not this a very great thing that poor man, now upon the earth, hath ſuch a paſſage to heaven, and may ſpeak up unto him who inhabits eternity, the glorious object of the adoration of angels, without the interveening of any creature: yea, with ſo ſure a warrand may approach the throne of God, and there pour out his ſoul, and preſent his requeſts unto him who lives and ſees: O with what aſtoniſhment ſhould we conſider this! ſuppoſe at ſome ſolemn times in our life this only might be attained, yea, that it were but in one part of the earth ſhould we not look on the whole earth beſides as accurſed, and reckon an abode there, were it a barren deſert and wilderneſs, to be preferable to all other advantages: it may truly be a queſtion whilſt we are moſt in the practice of this duty, if we believe the truth and reality thereof; but it is beyond queſtion what chriſtians have moſt ſenſibly found here, that they can ſay, if they be ſure they have a ſoul, they have been as ſure in this bleſſed way, they have had their ſoul reſtored and return'd again, and under ſome *deliquium*, that by wreſtling they have at laſt prevail'd, yea have got an anſwer from heaven, as if they had got it by an audible voice: now is not this a great and marvelous demonſtration? but oh what common thoughts have we thereof, and may not theſe things ſeem ſtrange, if ſeriouſly conſidered. 1. That we are not more reſtleſs to be ſurely perſwaded this is a truth when we are ſo highly concerned therein, that we may have further confirmations as to this, which we ſhould look on as an ineſtimable treaſure, both for our joy and eſtabliſhment.

2. It is ſtrange we can find it ſo eaſie a matter to *pray* and appear before God, that we are not afray'd to be haſty in uttering a matter before him, whilſt we conſider God is in heaven, and we are but on the earth; it is ſure, if we intend the bringing of our ſoul with us in ſuch a duty, it ſhould be more our ſtudy to watch unto prayer throughout our walk. 3. It may ſeem ſtrange how eaſily we can ſtep out from the world, and the noiſe thereof, in before the Lord, without the leaſt pauſe or time interveening, which the impreſſion of ſo great a buſineſs ſhould require; yea, ſo immediately in our return again, ſtep into the world, as if he had wholly forgot where we have been. 4. How ſtrange is formality in ſuch a buſineſs as *prayer* which is an addreſs to the living God, one of the moſt ſolemn acts of the ſoul; yea, we may call it the moſt natural work of a chriſtian, like the breathing of the child after the breaſts; alace it's ſad, that this ſeems rather a piece of invention many times, than a matter of earneſt with the Lord, not ſo much the breathing of the ſoul in deſire after him, as the expreſſing what ſhould be our deſires: O to what a claſs can ſuch a piece of atheiſm be reduced, as appears in our neareſt approaches to God? 5. Should we look on *prayer* as a duty and not conſider it as a ſingular enjoyment alſo, without which this earth would have a near appearance of hell, if we could not thus ſolace the ſoul in God, and get a vent under its greateſt preſſures: O *prayer!* what thoughts ſhould we have of it, if the truth thereof were more believed; I think that man who is ſure of the being and faithfulneſs of God, and of the reality of *prayer* needs not be ſolicitous with what face the world look on him; when thus his great intereſt and encouragement is ſecure, and a well is at his hand, that can anſwer all his complaints.

VI. Have we not this demonſtration alſo by that *argument* of experience, how near the bleſſed majeſty of God does in the way of *providence* approach to his people, and is ſurely known by a real correſpondence he hath with them in this way, in which he does ſo clearly verifie his word, holds forth light and counſel, gives the return of prayer, ſometimes with ſuch remarkable circumſtances, as cauſeth fear as well as joy, and will force that teſtimony, *this is verily the Lord*; it is true, that in the ſmalleſt things he is great, and thus declares himſelf to be God; but there is a more ſolemn and near approach, by ſome ſpecial ſteps of his providence, yea, by the rod he doth ſometimes ſpeak, as with an audible voice, and with ſuch a convoy of his power opens the ear of men and ſeals their inſtruction, as will force it's paſſage down to the reins, and in the hidden part cauſe them to underſtand wiſdom; there is ſometime alſo ſo wonderful a tract and ſeries of providences, and theſe ſo convincing that men cannot but ſee ſomething greater than man therein, whilſt things have been brought about with ſuch a ſurprizal, in the very opportune time and ſeaſon that their *mercy*, though great in it ſelf, hath not ſo much taken them up as the way how it is brought about, and their diſcovery of the immediate hand of God therein, and the truth of his word, and promiſe.

VII. I muſt further add, O! is not this a great *argument* which perſwades the ſoul of theſe truths by ſo ſure a way as *experience*, that thus we have an inward, and ſenſible demonſtration of the things of God, that are as certainly witneſſed, as theſe viſible heavens and earth are to our eyes, when they are moſt fixed thereon: O what is this which the chriſtian knows, yet knows ſo little what he hath thereby; this is indeed a ſight which puts the thing ſeen beyond queſtion or debate, for the ſoul hath it's feeling and taſte as ſure as the body, and hath a ſavour and reliſh of things ſuitable to it's own nature, whereby it can diſcern a peculiar ſweetneſs and fragrancy in that which may ſeem bitter, and grievous to the fleſh. It is by this ſight which *experience* gives, the chriſtian is a witneſs himſelf, is therein perſonally concern'd, does ſee

theſe

theſe great things with his own eyes and not with the eyes of others; the conſolations of God which are not ſmall, are no matter of report to him; he knows how no mercy hath been more ſweet and reliſhing as that which hath had a bitter croſs going before; yea never more ſenſibly found his own burden, then he had found it taken off, the laying on whereof was not ſo grievous as that relief, and eaſe hath been ſweet upon its removal.

Now to ſhut up this *argument*, I ſhall but add the teſtimony of two great and eminent witneſſes to the truth, who after they had been helped to ſerve their generation by the will of God, and were dying, had that large accompt to give from their *experience* of the truth and faithfulneſs of God in his word, and leave ſuch a ſeal to the ſame, worthy to be tranſmitted to poſterity; the *one* is that great ſervant of Chriſt *Beza*, who in his younger years, after the Lord had touched his heart by the word, was one day in the church of *Charenton*, where he providentialy met with that, *Pſal.* xci. which then was expounded, and with ſuch power was followed, that not only he found it marvelouſly ſweet to him at preſent, but was then helped to believe, yea to a great perſwaſion of the Lords making out all theſe promiſes to him in his perſwaſion, which as he after found verified, did at his death with much comfort witneſs the ſame, that as he had been then helped to cloſe with that great truth in the ſecond verſe, in taking the Lord for his God, and got a ſure claim thereto, yea that he ſhould be his refuge and fortreſs, he had found him that moſt remarkably in the after changes of his life, had delivered him from the ſnare of the fowler, and the noiſome peſtilence, having been in frequent hazard by the lying in wait of many to enſnare him, and ſometimes was in great hazard from the peſtilence in theſe places where he was called to reſide; yea, amidſt the civil wars, which were then ſo hot in *France*, had moſt convincing deliverances from many imminent hazards, when he was called to be preſent ſometimes with the *Proteſtant Princes* upon the fields, where thouſands did fall about him; and thus whilſt near his death, he found that *Pſalm* ſo obſervably verified whereon he was cauſed to hope, that he went through all theſe promiſes, declaring the comfortable accompliſhment thereof, and how he had found *the Lord's giving his angels charge over him*, had oft anſwered him when he had called on him, had been with him in trouble, delivered him; yea had ſatisfied him with a long life, and now ſays he, I have no more to wait for but the fulfilling of that laſt word of the *Pſalm, to ſhew him his ſalvation, for which in confidence he longed.* This though not writ by theſe who have given an account of his life in our language; yet I had the ſame from theſe moſt worthy of credit, who not only from ſome of the greateſt *French Proteſtants* had it, when they were in *France*, as a known and ſure paſſage, but told me they read the ſame there in a printed relation in that language, of his life and death. The ſecond teſtimony I ſhall here offer is from a grave and eminent miniſter of Chriſt in our own church within theſe few years, Mr. *George Gilleſpie*; who near his death did declare to theſe who were by, what a large proof he had, and aſſured perſwaſion of the truth of ſcripture from *experience*; that he knew ſo well what adventuring on the word was, and what it was to live on divine aſſiſtance, and be thus in all his concernments carried through, that he could not deſire, were he to live in the world, a more deſireable and ſatisfying life, than that of a continued reliance and depending on the Lord; and truly among many notable experiments that many have had of divine aſſiſtance: this was one very convincing, *how in a ſtrange land, whither he was called on the ſervice of the church, and in a grave aſſembly of many of the greateſt divines in that age, when one day he was ſurprized with an unexpected ren-*

counter of a learned man Mr. Selden, *who came on deſign with ſome others of that party, upon the* Eraſtian *intereſt to debate for it, by the ſtrongeſt arguments which they had then premeditated for it's defence; whilſt none appeared in that great aſſembly to give a return, though there were many ſingularly learned and able, he did on an immediate reliance on God adventure,* (leſt the adverſary ſhould take advantage thereat) *and gave a ſhort accompt of theſe arguments adduced, wherein the ſtrength of his diſcourſe did moſt lye, with ſo clear and ſatisfying an anſwer as aſtoniſhed all, yea did ſilence the adverſary with a marvelous conviction;* now this was the more convincing that having a little paper book in his hand, in which he was before obſerved to write down ſomething, he was by ſome after preſſed to let them ſee his notes, ſuppoſing the heads of his following diſcourſe were in it, but found only in ſome pages theſe words ſeveral times writ down, *Light O Lord, and Aſſiſtance,* his ſoul being then carried upward for the ſame; thus did that bleſſed man give in his witneſs to the truth when he was dying, from the ſure experience he had thereof, through his life; and with much aſſurance of the ſalvation of God died, which I muſt ſay is a remark, that in many inſtances might be obvious, how great peace and an abundant entrance, theſe have found in the cloſe of the day, who have been helped to moſt faithfulneſs in the publick intereſts of Chriſt, and his church, and to the moſt ſevere adherence to their light, anent the duties of the time; which I knew in an other worthy miniſter of Chriſt, not many years ſince, who by ſome of his laſt words did witneſs an unexpreſſible joy he found in this, that the Lord had keep'd him in a time of many trials from giving his ark a wrong touch, which he then declared to byſtanders, when he was on the very threſhold betwixt this, and another world.

SECOND ARGUMENT.

SECOND *Argument to demonſtrate the accompliſhment of the ſcripture is this, that not only chriſtian experience, but the obſervation of the church and people of God, doth in all ages bear witneſs thereto, how the Lord's way in theſe providences both of mercy and judgment, about the church, amidſt the various changes of her condition, yea, in the moſt ſtrange things which fall out in the world, doth convincingly anſwer the word, and verify the ſame.*

IT is indeed undenyable that the ſcripture of God, as it is written to the perſonal caſe of his people, and doth in their experience take place, ſo is there a part of it in a peculiar way directed to the church, the fulfilling whereof in the providences, and events of the time ſhould be the ſubject of our obſervation, and would ſingly help to confirm our faith of the truth thereof.

For proſecuting this argument I would touch it a little in theſe three branches. 1. How theſe general promiſes which belong to the church univerſal, and concern her in all ages, have an accompliſhment. 2. How theſe threatnings alſo of the word which do not only concern the church, but have a reſpect to her adverſaries are certainly fulfilled, and take place in men's obſervation, who do obſerve the judgments of their time. 3. How the ſcripture of God doth clearly ſhine upon the darkeſt footſteps of providence, even theſe which would ſeem moſt ſtrange and hard to underſtand, ſo that it may be demonſtrate *nothing falleth out in the world, or befalleth the ſaints, but what is moſt conſonant to the ſcripture.*

FIRST BRANCH, As to the firſt branch of this *argument,* I ſhall but inſtance five general promiſes, which we find held forth in the word concerning the church, and endeavour to ſhew how very clear and obvious the accompliſhment of them is, if men do not willingly ſhut their own eyes.

FIRST

First Promiſe wherein we find the ſcripture expreſs, is the *preſervation of the church* that he will be with her to the end of the world, and though he make an end of other nations, yet, will he not make an utter end of her, but while the ordinances of the ſun and the moon do laſt, and as the days of heaven ſo ſhall her days be prolonged, againſt her the gates of hell ſhall not prevail, *Jer.* xxx. 11. *Matt.* xvi. 18. Now that God hath truly verifyed this his promiſe and is as good as his word, is a truth though marvelous, yet, ſo very clear, and manifeſt, that I am ſure no atheiſt can deny, it may be ſo eaſily demonſtrated.

1. *That the church doth continue, and is kept alive to this day*, it doth certainly prove the truth of his promiſe, for it can be ſaid of her, and none can ſay it is a lye, ſhe hath outlived all her oppoſers, the greateſt of whom have found their grave in the quarrel, over whoſe tomb that laſt confeſſion of a great adverſary *Julian* may be written *viciſti tandem Galilæe*, hath not this deadly, and irreconcilable ſeed been prepetuate from fathers to children, but who hath proſpered in that enterpriſe, the archers have oft ſhot, and wounded her ſore, but her bow doth abide in ſtrength, as at this day, this is her *motto, perſecuted but not forſaken, caſt down, but not diſcouraged*, ſhe who hath brought many children, yet ceaſeth not to bear, whoſe age hath not marred her beauty, her eyes are not dim, nor ſtrength failed, a ſight which may cauſe us no leſs ſtand, and conſider this great wonder, than *Moſes* did at that which was but the ſhadow and emblem thereof, *a buſh burning and not conſumed*, for behold a church kept alive, yet ſtill in the flames, and when to appearance conſumed, it doth ariſe more glorious out of her own aſhes, this is indeed the only *Phœnix*, and we know no other, of whom that can be ſaid, hath ſhe not born out theſe univerſal deluges, which did like an inundation go over her head, *idolatry*, and *paganiſm* in the firſt times, and *antichriſtianiſm* with *arianiſm* in the after ages, yet not ſwallowed up, which may be no leſs marvelous than when ſhe was kept above the waters in the ark, and though her enemies have oft ſung her funeral ſong, and rejoyced over the dead bodies of her witneſſes, yet, they have riſen again, her dry bones have taken life, and come together, and behold ſhe is alive at this day. 2. Not only the churches preſervation, but the continued ſeries and ſucceſſion thereof unto this time, doth witneſs the fulfilling of this promiſe, that in the darkeſt times of her condition, ſhe hath not altogether diſappeared, even, when ſhe was ſo long hid in the wilderneſs, but ſtill in every age had ſome witneſſes, and though the church hath oft cryed out for the want of children, and been heard weeping, bemoaning her ſelf becauſe they were not, yet, we may ſay ſhe never wanted an offspring to this day, ſhe did never dye without an heir, and ſeed of her own, to raiſe up her name, even ſince the *covenant* was firſt made with her in *Adam*'s family, and though particular churches have their ſet times, which like the ſun, have the uſual periods, their height, and flowing, and afterwards a gradual decay, making way to the departure of light, yet, this made never void the promiſe of God to the church univerſal whoſe lamp was never put out, nay, ſhall not while the days of heaven do laſt. 3. We muſt alſo ſay that the continuance, and preſervation of the church is peculiar to her alone, and can be ſaid of no other intereſt and party beneath the ſun, for it is clear that there was no kingdom, or empire ſo firmly rooted, no ſociety ſo well governed by laws, backed with power, which hath had the beſt title and claim, but time at laſt did prevail over it, and made the ſame a trophee of her conqueſt; yea, the greateſt monarchies, and flouriſhing cities have at laſt yielded, ſo as of them it may be ſaid, *nunc ſeges eſt ubi Troia fuit*, but time cannot to this day boaſt of a triumph over the

church of God, though no nation, no family in the earth could ever plead antiquity with her: this is that intereſt, which hath born out all theſe great revolutions that ſo oft changed the very face of the world, yea, hath outlived ſo many kingdoms, and ſucceſſions thereof. 4. It doth convincingly demonſtrate the truth of this promiſe of the churches preſervation, that the world, yea greateſt atheiſts may ſee, this hath not come to paſs at an adventure, nay, not in an ordinary way of providence, but by a divine power, moſt diſcernible therein; while it is clear. 1. That no intereſt, or party had ever ſuch adverſaries, as the church, againſt whom the powers of the world, and the powers of darkneſs have always been on foot. 2. That outward advantages have uſually been on her adverſaries ſide, not only the great men of the earth, but thoſe of greateſt parts and abilities. 3. That there will was never wanting on their power and their deſign no leſs than to raze her to the foundation. 4. That this enmity hath been rooted, and irreconciliable, which time to this day could never root out. 5. That no intereſt did ever endure ſuch violent aſſaults, ſo many ſharp batteries, for it is obſervable that moſt of the wars, and commotions of every age, have been ſome way ſtated on the churches account, and what ever private quarrels men have had among themſelves, yet it hath not hindred the purſuit of their malice againſt *the woman*, and *her ſeed*. 6. That ſuch who have come out of her bowels, even the men of her own houſe, have oft been her greateſt enemies, and lain in wait to take her at an advantage in the day of her halting. 7. That her real friends have oft fainted in a time of her ſtrait, and ſtood afar off, yea, almoſt none of the children, which ſhe had brought forth have been then found to take her by the hand. 8. That the depths of ſatan, in her enemies, as an angel of light have ſometimes given her a ſore aſſault, ſo that if it had been poſſible, and ordinary means could have reacht their end, they ſhould have deceived the very elect. 9. I muſt add this further witneſs to the marvelous preſervation of the church, which in an ordinary way could not come to paſs, that we find no other party was ever brought ſo low and near death, to be yet alive, the knife was once at the churches throat in *Iſaac*, ſhe did ſeek to adopt a bond-woman's ſon in ſtead of a lawful heir, when *Abraham* agreed to *Sara*'s overture for the fulfilling of the promiſe; how near exſpiring do we find her in *Egypt*, when a ſentence to deſtroy all her male iſſue was gone forth? Yea, what but a miracle could have preſerved her, when ſhe was betwixt *Pharaoh* and the *Red-ſea*? How low was the church in the wilderneſs, and after in the days of the captivity, even broken to pieces with ſmall appearance of life, when her face was all blurred with weeping, and her enemies made ſport over her ruins at the rivers of *Babylon*, when the children of *Edom* cryed out let us raze her even to the foundation? Yea, could the church be nearer the grave, than when her bones were ſcattered at the graves mouth, but above all in that dark night when her head and ſhepherd was ſmitten, and her hope ſeemed to be buried in the grave with a ſtone put upon it, when ſhe could get no entertainment among the *Jews*, was wounded in the houſe of her friends, and the *Gentiles* in wrath roſe up againſt her, that for ſome hundred years the great *Empire* which had trod down all the nations about, put forth the outmoſt of power and malice for her undoing, O who could have thought the church ſhould outlive this? Yea, after all we find her toſt and hurried by *Antichriſt* into the wilderneſs, an adverſary more cruel than any that had gone before, where the dragon watcht to get her deſtroyed, but how in all theſe, and through that long dark night ſhe hath continued and marvelouſly flouriſhed, as the *Palm-tree*, under greateſt weights; ſo that we cannot but ſee that which her enemies being judges

will not deny, that this promiſe to the church of her preſervation is this day fulfilled, yea, that it hath not an ordinary way been brought about; ſurely *there is no inchantment againſt* Jacob, *not divination againſt* Iſrael, all her enemies have been found liars, *happy art thou above other people; for the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are everlaſting arms*, elſe ſo long ſince ſhe ſhould have been ſwallowed up; may we not ſtill ſay with aſtoniſhment, O what hath God wrought in her behalf.

SECOND *promiſe*; which I ſhall here inſtance, that God had made to his church in the word, *Of her increaſe and enlargement, that the earth ſhould be covered with the knowledge of God, as the ſea of water, and her bounds ſhould be from the ſea to the utmoſt rivers*, which was promiſed to Chriſt in the behalf of his church and that ſhe ſhould poſſeſs the gates of her enemies, *Pſal.* lxxxix. 25. *Pſal.* ii. 8. *Iſa.* xlii. iv. *Iſa.* liv. 3. As this promiſe is expreſs in the ſcripture, we muſt ſay it is no leſs clear and evident in it's accompliſhment, that ſurely the Lord hath kept his word, whereto the event doth moſt exactly anſwer, and though yet it be not to the full made out, I am ſure there is ſo much at this day manifeſt, conſidering the former condition of the church, as undenyably proveth the fulfilling of the forementioned promiſe which even to the conviction of greateſt atheiſts may be demonſtrated from theſe grounds.

1. That vaſt extent which the kingdom of Chriſt hath had in the world, for this cannot be denyed, that the greateſt empire, or monarchy could never ſo far extend their conqueſt, as the church hath done, ſince the wall of partition was taken down; ſhort are the limits of the *Grecian* and *Roman* empire conſidered with this, whoſe bounds have been the ends and uttermoſt parts of the earth, where neither *Greece* or *Rome* did ever ſet up their trophees; hath not the goſpel as the ſun made its circuit from the *eaſt* to the *weſt?* yea croſſed the ſeas, to the dark northern nations, thus fulfilling its courſe, in order to it's turn again to the place of it's firſt riſing, that it may, as we are ſure it ſhall once, viſit the *Jews* again, and the eaſtern places of the world that now are buried in a night of darkneſs, which I think will be as ſure a preſage of the break of day, and ſecond coming of the Lord, as the morning is to the world of the ſuns accompliſhing it's courſe, and that it is returning again to the *eaſt* where it ſhould riſe; hath not the goſpel now been through *Aſia* where it did not tarry for a night, for many flouriſhing churches were there, and the going back of the tide from thence was it's flowing to another part of the world, which is indeed obſervable of the church, as it is of the ſea, that what it hath loſed in one part, it hath gained in another; did the vaſt diſtance of *Africa*, it's great barren deſerts, or ſcorching heat hinder the goſpel's making a viſit thither, ſo as it was once a fertil ſoil, and brought forth many famous lights, yea, ſomething yet doth both there, and in the *eaſt* parts of the world remain, to ſhew the goſpel was truly in theſe places; and hath *Europe* though laſt, been leaſt on this account? Yea, what do mean the late diſcoveries of unknown parts of the earth, but to make way for a more full performance of this promiſe, that the goſpel might ſtretch it's conqueſt over the line, which ſurely was the gold and treaſure Chriſt's deſigned from thence that even *America* might have her day alſo, *and the voice of their turtle be heard in theſe lands.* 2. Not only the large extent of the church as to it's bounds doth witneſs this, but alſo the great, and numerous offspring of ſons and daughters which in theſe parts where the goſpel hath been were brought forth to Chriſt, for we may ſay, what *John* ſaw in viſion hath been very manifeſt to after ages, an innumerable company of all tongues, nations and languages, of whom it could be ſaid theſe are born in *Zion*, O how great a harveſt of the nations, is even already gathered? What a fleece hath every particular church

church caſt? What a marvelous increaſe hath been in ſome places after ſpecial tides of the goſpel! May we not ſay that turth is now beyond debate, that out of one, and him not only as good as dead, but truly dead there hath come forth as the ſand of the ſea and ſtars of heaven in number, the church hath inherited *Joſeph*'s bleſſing of the womb, and the breaſts of a fruitful offspring, the dew of Chriſt's youth hath been as the womb of the morning. O what a marvelous and goodly company will this once be when gathered together? then will the performance of theſe precious promiſes be fully manifeſted. 3. This truth may be demonſtrate not only from the real conqueſt of the goſpel, and theſe excellent trophees of her victory over many noted enemies, who have after been veſſels of honour, but alſo from the feigned ſubjection that ſo many have been made to render, is it not ſtrange, what a multitude doth in theſe times profeſs the truth, and yet hate it, and were never drawn with the cords of love? How very many have courted the name of a chriſtian, and woo'd the ſhadow of religion, who never knew the truth thereof, which certainly is a convincing evidence of the goſpels conqueſt that ſo many knees ſhould bow to the name of *Jeſus*, whoſe hearts were never bowed, or really ſubdued to him. 4. It is an unanſwerable proof of this truth that we ſee that churches increaſe, and enlargement hath come to paſs moſt punctually after the manner, yea, with all the circumſtances as were foretold and promiſed, ſo that the event doth in every thing anſwer the word, for, *firſt* it is there held out, that from a day of ſmall things which men would be ready to deſpiſe, it ſhould grow up as a tender plant, and ſpread forth it's branches over the nations, that the children of the deſolate ſhould be more than of the married wife, and the glory of the ſecond temple, exceed that of the firſt, and O! hath it not accordingly come to paſs? 2. This great increaſe and enlargement of the church, was to fall out in the days of the *New Teſtament*, when Chriſt ſhould be lifted up, that then he ſhould draw all men after him; for theſe promiſes we have thereof in the *Old Teſtament* do clearly point at the times of the goſpel, and doth not the event here accordingly anſwer? 3. The ſcripture holdeth forth that the falling away of the *Jews* ſhould be the riches of the *Gentiles*, and that their rejection ſhould make way for the fulfilling of this promiſe even the ingathering of the nations, and do not men ſee the event with this very circumſtance? 5. We find the *Iſles*, and outmoſt parts of the earth are given to Chriſt for his inheritance, and foretold as a ſpecial part of the churches increaſe, and do we not clearly ſee there is no place of the world, where Chriſt's kingdom is more viſible, where more children have been begot to him by the goſpel, we may ſay, than in theſe northern places, even in theſe *Iſles* of *Britain*, and *Ireland*, which are almoſt the uttermoſt parts of the earth, there being but little from that corner, and nearer the pole which is inhabited, yea we may judge hath been that *Thule* whereof the ancients did ſo much ſpeak. 6. Was it not alſo foretold that the church ſhould poſſeſs the gates of her enemies, at whoſe great increaſe the world ſhould wonder, the princes thereof ſee, and be troubled while God is known in her palaces for a refuge, and doth not the event witneſs this, that over all the counſels, and eſſays which the world hath had to hinder the churches growth, her riſing hath always been upon the ruins of her greateſt enemies, yea, theſe who have been a terror in the land of the living did oft fall, and break themſelves in that attempt, can men deny the marvelous progreſs of the church, how from a ſmall beginning ſhe at laſt poſſeſſed the gates of both the *eaſt*, and weſtern *empire* her old enemies, and do we not this day ſee her conqueſt advancing on the ruins of antichriſt, her laſt and greateſt adverſary. 7. As the fulfilling of this promiſe concerning the churches increaſe is undeniable, ſince men can-

not contradict their ſenſe therein, we muſt alſo ſay this is a thing great, and marvelous, which no leſs than ſome divine, and extraordinary power could bring about, if we conſider theſe things, firſt, that quick diſpatch which the churches growth, under the days of the *New Teſtament*, hath made. O might not the pagan world wonder how in the ſpace of two or three hundred years it was almoſt become wholly chriſtian; O ſtrange! a *Diocleſian*, and *Maximus* ſo grievouſly perſecuting, and trampling on the very name of chriſtianity, and yet near that ſame age, this great *Roman Empire*, and Emperor ſubmitting to the goſpel which was fulfilled in the days of *Conſtantine*. 2. How aſtoniſhing was it for the churches riſe and increaſe to be brought about upon the ruin, and downfal of the idols of the nations, who had their temples, and were worſhipped as God, that the world ſhould be made to renounce it's *Bible*, and that religion which for ſo many ages was deeply footed by tradition from their fathers; theſe altars which were had in ſuch reverence, demoliſhed, and their temples made a ruinous heap, yea, the very name of their Gods ſhould be thus obliterate, was not this indeed very wonderful? but *Dagon* hath no ſtrength to ſtand before the ark of the God of *Iſrael*. 3. That it ſhould be thus advanced by ſuch a mean as the preaching of the word, even of that which to the *Jews* was a ſtumbling block, and to the *Greeks* fooliſhneſs, how this voice ſhould put to perpetual ſilence theſe oracles that for ſo many ages had given a reſponſe to the world might be indeed aſtoniſhing, yea, that the churches increaſe ſhould thus be brought about, at no leſs rate, than the overturning of greateſt kingdoms, the converſion of ſo many nations, ſhould tame, and civilize the moſt ſavage and barbarous, cauſe the lion to lie down with the lamb, and even make ſo great and univerſal a change in the face of the univerſe. 4. Doth it not ſpeak forth ſome divine power the carrying on of the churches growth, and increaſe, not only over the violence of men, but over all theſe dreadful errors, and inventions, theſe thick miſts which both in former and late times, have aſcended out of the pit to choke her, that we may ſay, the church hath not only been helped to tread upon the lion and dragon, but on the adder and cockatrice alſo, and doth carry the trophies of her conqueſt over all theſe at this day. 5. I would add, is it not marvelous how the churches increaſe hath been advanced in a way moſt contrary to all the rules of ordinary policy, by which ſtates, and empires have riſen, not by diſſimulation, but greateſt plaineſs, and free dealing for Chriſt, and his miniſters did never flatter the world to embrace the truth; not by open violence, but a more excellent ſpirit and power before which men could not ſtand, where fooliſhneſs was made to confound and outwit human wiſdom, and weakneſs to overcome ſtrength, that we may ſay, O how little of man and much of God was to be ſeen therein.

THIRD Promiſe which the Lord hath given to his church in the word is, *the giving of the ſpirit and pouring out of the ſame*, which is there expreſly held forth and promiſed, *Zach.* xii. 10. *Joh.* xiv. 17. *Iſa.* lix. 21. And doth concern all times of the church, though in a more full meaſure, to be let out in the days of the goſpel. It is true the chriſtians inward experience can beſt witneſs this, for theſe have an argument from within; they know, and they are ſure they have received the ſpirit by the word, whereby they underſtand theſe things which are ſpiritually diſcerned, but that which here is intended, it is to ſhew, that the ſpirit is truly let forth to the church according to the promiſe, that it doth accompany the truth, and doctrine of Chriſt, and purity of the ordinances, as a thing which from clear undeniable evidences may be demonſtrated to the conviction of the greateſt atheiſt: for I muſt think even byſtanders, ſuch who never knew any ſaving work of the

ſpirit, but live in theſe parts where the ordinances are diſpenſed with purity and power, if they ſhut not their eyes, may oft clearly ſee ſomething going forth with the word, that is beyond words, a divine ſpirit and power which ſendeth forth it's ſavour in the daily adminiſtration of the goſpel, yea, by it's effects, and ſome convincing diſcovery thereof, doth force this truth in upon mens conſciences, who are other ways ſtrangers thereto. Now to hold forth the accompliſhment of ſo great a promiſe that God is faithful and true therein, I would give in theſe clear and convincing witneſſes of the ſame.

1. Theſe excellent gifts, and indowments given to the church, are they not a viſible proof of this truth? For it is undeniable, where once the goſpel cometh that inſtruments are raiſed with another ſpirit, reapers ſent forth, while there is a harveſt to be gathered, and ſhaped for their work, yea, theſe who were of mean and ordinary parts, when called forth to the ſervice of the church, will have another luſtre, that it may be oft ſeen with aſtoniſhment, how far not only they exceed themſelves but theſe who were of more eminent natural indowments, I would but ſeriouſly ask men who never laid this truth to heart whence is that variety of gifts, ſo ſuitably diſpenſed to the various employments, and different pieces of ſervice, the church doth call for? How are they thus ſuited to the ſeveral times, yea, to the very genius and temper of ſuch a time? Whence is it, that every gift, and qualification is ſo fitted and diſpoſed for it's proper uſe, ſome moſt peculiarly ſhaped out to awake and threaten, theſe *Boanerges*, while others are ſet forth with a ſpirit eminently fitted to comfort; ſome mighty in perſwaſion, yet not ſo fit to expound; others moſt dexterous to inſtruct, yet, not ſo powerful to apply; ſome the gift of tongues, and others the tongue of the learned to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to the weary; to ſome the face of a lion is given, when a heroick ſpirit of courage and reſolution is called for, to others the face of a calf for patient enduring in ſuffering times, ſurely it were a choice meditation to think how with as great wonder, we may ſay of this excellent body of the church, as of the natural body of man, how curious, yea, marvelouſly is it framed, where every part doth anſwer another, and to the uſe of the whole, each hath it's peculiar excellency, and ſomething proper to every one's gift may be then ſeen, as well as in the face of man, by which in ſomethings they differ from all other. 2. Theſe more eminent extraordinary breathings of the ſpirit do alſo witneſs this truth, which at ſome ſpecial times when the churches neceſſity requireth it hath been moſt diſcernible, when the Lord ſendeth forth his ſervants about a more than ordinary piece of work, either to do or ſuffer; when he is to plant the church in ſome place, where the goſpel will meet with much oppoſition, is it not then manifeſt how ſome more than ordinary power, and irreſiſtible efficacy doth accompany the truth, before which there is no ſtanding? the diſputer is then in his reaſoning confounded by ſomething above reaſon; the untoward, and rude are forced to ſtoop before the word and to confeſs they have to do with power, and not with words; yea, theſe whom the Lord maketh uſe of, who were feeble and weak as others, in that day are made as a brazen wall, and defenced city. 3 Is it not alſo undeniable that now under the *New Teſtament* there are miniſters of the ſpirit, and not of a dead letter and empty ſound? that with the word, there goes along a miniſtration of power and life, whence a majeſty, and authority attending the publick ordinances is oft ſo diſcernible, that even theſe who know not what the ſpirit is, are made to ſee ſomething therein which doth dazle them with aſtoniſhment; whence is it that at ſometimes ſuch a beauty, and power ſhineth forth with ordinances like a glance of the glory of God, even going before mens eyes,

which for the preſent hath made a wonderful change upon ſome very groſs men and put them in an other temper, yea, forced them with fear to acknowledge that ſurely God is near in the aſſemblies of his people, and I would ask whence it is, the word giveth law to men's conſciences? and ſhould ſpeak with ſuch an authority, as maketh them all to ſhiver, that even the worſt of men are ſometime made to ſtand before the miniſtry of the word, like men ſtanding at the bar upon life and death, before a judge whoſe authority they durſt not decline. 4. It is very diſcernible what a great difference and an other appearance, there is both on miniſters, and chriſtians at one time, from what they are at an other, in the diſcharge of duty, as if theſe were not the ſame perſons; which appeareth not only in the enlargement, and ſtraitning of their gift, but alſo in power and life; is it not ſeen, with what liberty theſe do ſometimes pray, are as a ſhip with a full gale before the wind? that it is then eaſy to preach, when at other times there is like a ſhut door; that even onlookers may perceive a ſenſible languiſhing, and them hampered in their very expreſſions, yea, as men rowing againſt a contrary wind, the word wanting that ſavour and reliſh it hath had at other times, and this not through a natural indiſpoſition, or want of preparation, but that which all who ever ſerved God in the ſpirit muſt confeſs, hath moſt ſenſibly come upon them when they have thought themſelves at the greateſt advantage for going about duty: O who can deny this evidence of the ſpirit, a thing in all ages ſo ſenſibly felt, yea, even obvious to the worſt of men. 5. It is alſo clear that wherever the Lord hath had a church at ſome ſpecial turns of her condition there have uſually been ſome more ſolemn times of the ſpirit and high ſpring tides of the goſpel, there was indeed a marvelous flowing forth of the ſpirit of God after Chriſt's aſcenſion, which like a mighty current did carry all before it, at which time more ſucceſs did follow one ſermon, than hath been by the miniſtry of many others in an age; this made the world wonder, as if ſome univerſal enchantment had fallen on men; what that could be, which the more they ſought to bear down, the more it increaſed, that made the rich chooſe poverty, and thoſe who dwelt in palaces, take themſelves with chearfulneſs to the dens and caves of the earth; but beſides this, it is very manifeſt that in a large meaſure the ſpirit hath been let forth to the church in after ages, yea, there is no particular church where the light hath ſhined but hath had it's ſpecial times, ſome ſolemn day of the pouring out of the ſpirit, before the ſun went down; which may be obſerved either at the firſt breaking up of the goſpel, or at ſome other remarkable time, and change of her condition; whence a great gathering of ſouls to Chriſt hath followed, beſides the reaching of the conſcience, and ſtirring the affection of many others under a common work of the ſpirit, which uſually goeth along with ſolemn times. 6. The going back of the tide, and viſible withdrawing of the ſpirit from particular churches, where it hath ſometime, in a large meaſure, been let forth, is a very convincing witneſs to the truth of this promiſe; for it is clearly ſeen at what a ſtand the Goſpel is in theſe places where it moſt eminently ſhined, that the land which bloſſomed and was like a watered garden, hath been made as the heath in the wilderneſs, and then that the miniſters of Chriſt, whoſe lot hath fallen in ſuch a time are put to very ſore work, to work as it were, with oars for want of wind, to caſt out the net all night, and catch nothing; a ſhut door is upon them in the exerciſe of their miniſtry, duty is made burdenſome becauſe the Lord is againſt them, there is an evident reſtraint upon the word, and it's intercourſe is more with the ear, than with the conſciences of men, yea, any liberty they find is to execute a commiſſion of judgment, and to denounce the woe of the goſpel.

O, doth

O, doth not ſo manifeſt withdrawing of the ſpirit witneſs the outletting thereof, and that it is a certain and real thing. 7. Do not the ſtirrings, and ſtrange convictions, which even the worſt of men have ſometimes under the word, witneſs a divine ſpirit and power going along therewith, that which forceth an aſſent from their conſcience to the truth, which other ways they hate, yea, maketh them for the time, wonder they ſhould not have been more ſerious in the ways of God, yea, it doth often put a thorn in the bed of their ſecurity, for indeed the word, and the light thereof doth torment theſe who dwell in the earth: and truly this is a marvelous thing, which winneth in upon men's ſecret deſigns and counſels, doth reveal to them the moſt cloſe thoughts of their heart, which they are ſure men's eye could not reach, taketh them down through themſelves, and yet, that the world knoweth not whence it is, yea, are they not forced to confeſs, what a great difference they find betwixt the word from the mouth of ſome, who are holy, and ſerious though held out in greateſt ſimplicity, than from others even of greater gifts, and accompanied with more ſhew of eloquence, that ſurely the one hath an other ſound and reliſh, ſpeaketh more feelingly home to their heart, than the moſt poliſhed diſcourſe of greateſt orators. 8. One witneſs more I ſhall here give to the truth of this promiſe, even theſe eminent examples of the grace of God, which in every age have ſhined in the firmament of the church, ſome in love and zeal, ſome in patience and humility, ſome in the ſtrong acts of faith, and ſelf denial; which do certainly demonſtrate a more excellent ſpirit than that which is in the world, whence they appear with another luſtre in their walk and carriage, and have a ſweet and fragrant ſavour of the ſpirit to the very diſcerning of *byſtanders*, which truely ſheweth that *his wind doth blow on his garden, when the ſpices ſend forth ſo pleaſant a ſcent.*

FOURTH. We find an expreſs promiſe in the word of deliverance to the church in a low, and oppreſſed condition, that ſurely the Lord will plead her cauſe, will deliver his people when he ſeeth their ſtrength is gone, and ſave them from the hands of their enemies, *Pſal.* xviii. 47, 48, 50. *Pſ.* xxii. 4, 5. *Iſ.* liv. 17. *Iſ.* li. 23. It is true, this promiſe hath it's bounds, limits, and proviſions which ſhould be taken along in the application thereof, we know the covenant of God with particular churches is conditional only, he promiſeth that he will be with them while they are with him, yea, it is oft ſeen, (and there is no jarr here with this promiſe) that a people profeſſing the goſpel, confederate with God, following duty, have even turned their back before the enemy, and in the holy providence of God, have for a time been given up to their fierce rage and violence; but it is alſo ſure that this promiſe hath an accompliſhment, and in the day of the churches ſtrait the Lord hath oft appeared, by a ſtrong outſtretched hand for her help, his own arm brought ſalvation to his people, when they ſought to him: for *God is known in her palaces for a refuge*, yea, ſurely the church might oft ſing that ſong on ſuch clear grounds as though with *Iſrael* ſhe had been ſtanding at the *Red-ſea, thy right hand, O Lord, is full of power, thy right hand hath daſhed in pieces thy enemies*; for what nation, or people is like this to whom he hath ſhewed ſuch marvelous things. Now to ſhew forth the faithfulneſs of God in this promiſe, I would offer ſome few things that are a moſt clear and undeniable witneſs thereto.

1. There are few ages, but we have ſome record of the churches condition, which hold forth ſuch ſignal convincing providences of God, in behalf of his oppreſſed church and people, as may be a manifeſt ſeal to this truth; it is true ſome times have been more remarkable for ſuffering, times of judgment and

of

of a growing trial wherein this truth hath not ſo clearly ſhined forth, yea that long night which the church had under antichriſt, might ſeem to call it in queſtion; but nevertheleſs, if men take a ſerious look of the Lord's way and ſeries of providence in ages paſt, comparing one time with another, what the ſtraits, and moſt extreme caſe of the church hath at laſt reſolved in, they will find cauſe to cry with aſtoniſhment, *great deliverances giveth he to his people*, yea the Lord hath done great things for them. I am ſure, were there a full record with that true account which might be given, of theſe more remarkable deliverances, that particular churches have met with, ſince the firſt planting of the goſpel among them, wherein God's very immediate hand for their help hath been diſcernible, it ſhould *non-plus* the world, and greateſt atheiſts about the real fulfilling of this promiſe. 2. The confeſſion of the church's enemies hath oft witneſſed this truth, that in purſuing their malice to trouble and undoe her, they have but undone themſelves; how tormenting diſappointments have cauſed their very fleſh to to pine away, and cloſe and iſſue of their rage forced this conviction from them at laſt, that the church is a burdenſome ſtone, to be lifted up, a party with whom it is dangerous to meddle; have not ſuch been made to diſcern ſomething of a divine hand ſo clearly againſt them, blaſting their counſels, and moſt promiſing attempts, as if their eyes with *Balaam* had been opened to ſee the angel in their way, yea in all ages it is known how the conſcience even of the worſt hath oft bewrayed ſomething of a preſaging fear they have had of theſe whom they purſued with greateſt malice, and a dreadful impreſſion they had of a praying people, and their prayers. 3. This truth hath had the cleareſt witneſs in times of the church's greateſt ſtrait and extremity, when difficulties have appeared inſuperable and a deliverance in an ordinary way of providence moſt hopeleſs, when viſible means have been withdrawn, all refuge failed and none to help, that in ſuch a day the Lord hath been ſeen upon the mount and unexpectedly by very ſtrange means brought deliverance to a broken, almoſt ruined church, even as it were betwixt the bridge, and the water; ſo that who would have a clear view of the accompliſhment of his puniſhment of this promiſe, may but turn back on theſe more remarkable extreme exigencies of the church's condition, and there have it, how after a ſweet ſun ſhine have followed the moſt dark and cloudy times, a raging ſtorm hath reſolved into a refreſhing calm, yea, that with a further growth of the church's trial, and doubling of her burden, her enlargement, and deliverance hath broken up with theſe great and obvious remarks therein, that it was a convincing return of prayer and wreſtling, with a further addition of ſome new and ſingular mercy therewith, yea, ſome eminent act of judgment upon her adverſaries. 4. The greateſt advantage, and victories which men have got over the churches, and people of God can alſo bear witneſs to this, that when the wicked have ſprung up like the graſs, and the workers of iniquity ſeemed to flouriſh, this very way hath the Lord taken to bring about a more full deliverance: Yea, on the other hand, hath it not been very obvious how the church's gain hath been brought forth out of the greateſt loſs, that theſe wounds which ſeemed moſt deadly, by the infinitely wiſe providence of God, have turned to be her moſt effectual, and through cure; and men's unreaſonable violence, and rage againſt the church hath oft had an evident tendency to bring about even that whereto it ſeemed moſt directly contrary, ſome further mercy and deliverance, than could have been expected; as the *Amorites* refuſing *Iſrael* but paſſage through their land did prove the very mean to give them more than they ſought, the poſſeſſion of that land for an inheritance. 5. This witneſs the obſervation of the church in all ages can bear to this promiſe, that deliverance hath oft ſprung up, and been

brought to her hand from a corner, and by such means, as none would have expected, by such, as none but God could do; a sudden report and rumour; 1 *Sam.* xxii. 27. means that have been not only small, and improbable, but that looked directly contrary, as in bringing the church out of *Egypt*, yea, sometime by the wicked's being ensnared in the work of their own hands, is it not obvious, how the Lord hath met men's private interests to put them on, for befriending his church? and hath caused the earth to help the woman and raised up one oppressor to punish another, yea, often hath prepared carpenters, whence it was least thought, to cut the horns of those who had scattered his people. 6. There is this convincing witness to the truth of such a promise, that sudden remarkable change, which may be oft discerned both on men's inward frame, and the outward face of the church, when a time of mercy, and enlargement is come; instruments raised of the Lord with discernible elevation of their spirits to act, and do exploits, the feeble then made strong, and these who sometime would have fainted at an ordinary piece of service dare with such a gale of divine assistance, run, as it were, through a troop, and overleap a wall; for indeed this may in all ages be obvious, how easy it is to move in the day when the Lord moveth for his people, and strengthneth the girdle of their loins, that it was not their bow, or sword, which got them the victory, but the very finger of God, something above the counsels of men, ordinary means, which hath sometimes been made clear as the noon-day, so that even, at some distance, these who are wise to discern the times, did see when there was a breaking up of a day of a church's hope, how a previous motion, and stir amongst the dry bones, the Lord as in the top of the mulberry trees hath been then discernible, and some promising appearance from the present disposition, and temper of the godly in that time (though we must grant mercy and soveraign grace, hath oft met the church when little of this hath appeared) which, like the breaking up of that cloud in the top of mount *Carmel* to the prophet, though at first but as an hand-breath hath shewed that deliverance to the church was not far off. 7. I would add this witness also; these convincing providences which in all ages have been shewed against the enemies of the church, such as men could not pass without some remark, what an issue these have had, who have sometimes been a sore rod on the people of God, yea, a terror in the land of the living? how they have become a most abject and contemptible party, like bees who have lost their sting; their countenance hath been changed, and they ceased to be any more a fear, when once their work was done, and the date of their commission for the humbling and trying of the church expired; yea a judicial stroke from the Lord, hath been often seen upon their very judgment and resolutions, which could not then serve them to trouble and afflict the church, the day being turned, and the time of her deliverance come.

Fifth, There is this *promise* also which concerneth the church, as well as christians in their personal case, *that all things work together for the good of those who love God*, *Rom.* viii. 28. the accomplishment whereof as it is written out in providence to the observation of men, I would here touch. This is indeed a great comprehensive promise, which in the constant course and tenor of providence about the church we may see, it doth take place; how these turnings and changes of the world, the most strange emergents of the time, the various motions, and interests of men, do cooperate together, and have an undoubted tendency to bring forth the church's good as though they did intentionally act for the same, there will indeed, one day, be a more clear and marvelous discovery of this, when the Lord hath perfected his work,

and

and the myſtery of God is finiſhed, the church brought ſafe to the harbour, then ſhall it be fully manifeſt, to what end, all theſe ſtorms, and croſs winds in the counſels and deſigns of men were, theſe things which in the time could not be underſtood, but ſeemed perplexed and ſtrange, did really work for the church's good, for then men will ſee with their eyes a full performance of the word; yet we muſt ſay, even here, in every age, amidſt the various changes of the church's caſe, this is ſo clearly manifeſt, that there is no ſerious obſerver of providence, but may bear witneſs to it.

1. That not only the church's good, but even her greateſt good, hath moſt clearly had it's riſe, and been brought forth out of the greateſt miſchiefs and hurts intended againſt her; that if we ſearch ſcripture, and will turn over theſe after-records of the church's condition, we ſhall there find the moſt remarkable attempts, and plots ſuch as *Pharaoh*'s laſt eſſay to deſtroy the *Iſraelites*, *Hamans* great deſign to root out the ſeed of the *Jews*, that great maſterplot *Sathan* once had on foot, to cruſh the goſpel, and the chriſtian church by crucifying her head, yea, in theſe laſt times *Antichriſt*s killing the witneſſes have all, as if really intended by the inſtruments as well as the firſt mover, brought forth the church's greateſt good; ſo as the after mercy and deliverance hath carried ſome viſible proportion to her trial, and to the greatneſs of her adverſaries deſign. 2. It may be alſo clear, if we but trace back theſe memorable changes, which have been up and down the earth, how direct a tendency they have had to this end, did not the bringing down that great image of the monarchies witneſs this? We find *Nebuchadnezar* raiſed up as a rod to the church, and *Cyrus* for a deliverer; we may ſee the *Perſian* and *Grecian* monarchies brought down, to make way for the ſetting up of the *Meſſias* his kingdom. *Antiochus* muſt ſtand a little for a ſharp trial, and his downfall give the church a new breathing, and hold forth to after ages a remarkable monument of the judgment of God againſt his enemies. Peaceable *Auguſtus* muſt have his time in whoſe days ſhall be abundance of peace; we find a *Titus* ſet up to execute the judgment of God on the *Jews*, to make way for the further enlargement to the gentile church, a *Nero*, and *Domitian* to help forward the church's ſuffering, and a *Conſtantine* to give her ſome reſt, after ſo long and ſore an aſſault, and at laſt, the *Roman* empire mouldred down for *Antichriſt*'s riſe, to accompliſh what did remain of the ſufferings of Chriſt in his church, by that adverſary 3. We may oft ſee a very ſtrange appointment, and concurrence of things, how inſtruments act to bring about the Lord's end and advance his church's intereſt, even while each one doth moſt vigorouſly drive their own proper end and deſign, which ſheweth there is ſurely a living ſpirit in the wheels, that ordereth theſe motions, a ſupreme and firſt mover that can thus determine them, whither they will, or not, to ſerve his end and the church's good, when they moſt directly intend the contrary. 4. We have ſeen how in mens plotting the ruin of the church there is oft an unſeen hand determining their judgment, and inclination to fall upon that very way, than which, we would think nothing could have been more direct for her good and their own ruin, how an *Huſhai* hath been ſent in, or ſome have been ſtirred up amongſt themſelves (upon their own intereſt) to break the pernicious counſels and deſigns of others. 5. We have alſo ſeen the perſonal quarrels of the church's enemies among themſelves, brought to ſuch an height, and to meet ſo ſeaſonably, that onlookers might clearly perceive that it hath been from the Lord, a judgement for their rage and violence againſt his poor oppreſſed people. 6. We have ſeen the church's enemies raiſed to a ſtrange height, all advantages favouring them, until their plot and mine hath been ripe for ſpringing, and lo, at

that very choke, ſomething unexpected hath fallen out which did turn their former ſucceſs to their further ruin, yea, diſappoint all; this the world is ready to call ſome fatal and malevolent conjunction, which cannot be reſiſted, and what is this in effect, but the witneſs of men's conſcience to a divine hand? 7. Have we not ſeen ſome ſore daſh and overthrow of the church bring forth her good and a more full victory, how viſible help and means have been taken out of the way, that ſomething above means might be ſeen in her condition, even in that day, when all hath been given for loſt, yea, truths loſing the day upon the field, bring forth her triumph on the ſcaffold and at the ſtake. 8. We have ſeen moſt deſpicable and ordinary things made ſubſervient for ſome great piece of the Lord's work, a very ſmall thing made the firſt riſe of ſtrange revolutions, that remarkable changes have been oft lying in the boſom of a common providence; yea, truly we find both ſcripture, and the obſervation of after ages witneſs, that the church's deliverance and outgate did almoſt never come that way, by ſuch a method and means, as ſhe had moſt expected the ſame, and that God's time of working may be oft very contrary to our time of expecting. I ſhall only add, is it not oft ſeen (which I am ſure all ages can witneſs) how men's endeavours to darken the truth by error hath been an effectual means for it's further clearing? that the growing of a trial, a violent, and ſore exacting upon the church, hath kindly wrought towards her delivering and enlargement, her meat hath been oft brought even out of the eater, by means moſt deſtructive thereto, and a ſword muſt pierce the church's heart, that thoughts of many may be diſcovered, a time of perſecution muſt help to cure the diviſions amongſt the godly, and bring them together in the furnace, which proſperity could not do; yea it is oft ſeen, which former ages can alſo witneſs, that the very undoing of the church hath been God's bleſſed way, to keep her from being undone.

The SECOND BRANCH.

DOth concern theſe *ſcripture threatnings which are held forth in the word, with a reſpect to the viſible church, and againſt a people profeſſing the goſpel*, that no privileges they have above others ſhall exempt them from judgment, yea, and from very ſad ſtrokes, he hath known them above the reſt of the world, he will contend with them moſt ſeverely becauſe of ſin, and ſuch particular evils as we find the word threatneth.

I touched a little ſome ſcripture threatnings, in the preceeding argument as concerned chriſtians in their private experience; what I here intend is, to point at this truth, as it is written in the providences, and judgments of every time to men's obſervation, how judgments from the Lord, which point, as with the finger, at the abounding ſins of that time, do reach a land and particular churches, according to the threatnings of the word; this is indeed manifeſt, that the greateſt promiſes made to a people, we find backed with ſaddeſt threatnings, and accordingly we find the greateſt monuments of wrath have uſually been ſet up, where ſometimes the largeſt offers of the goſpel were, yea, that the anger of the Lord may draw ſo deep againſt a people profeſſing his name, as to make their land deſolate, and the high ways thereof mourn; for in this precinct of the church doth both judgment and mercy moſt eminently ſhine forth, and the Lord's way there doth differ from that he hath with any other people. Now to clear this grave truth a little, how theſe threatnings of the word, againſt a nation, and people becauſe of ſin are alſo verifyed in their judgments, I ſhall touch a few inſtances, that are moſt known

and

and obvious, where we may lay the word and observation of the church together, and see how they answer one the other.

1. We find the *threatnings of the word do point at the time of a peoples judgment*, 1 *Thes.* ii. 16. *Rev.* xiv. 15. 18. that when they fill up the measure of their sin, and their cup is full, the Lord will not then defer the execution; until the cup of the *Amorites* was full he did let them alone; and we find answer deferred to the cry of the souls under the altar, for avenging their blood on antichrist, because that accursed party had yet more to do against the church and the saints, more to suffer under their hand. Now to witness the accomplishment of this; let us but consider what in all times may be observed. First, that there is an ordinary growth and height of sin, which a land cometh to before destruction, some national and universal spreading thereof, prodigious outbreakings, the utter rejecting of reproof, which shew that a people's case must then be on some turn, yea, that strange, and unusual sinning, useth to go before some strange stroke. 2. Before judgment comes, is it not seen, how the sin of a people hath become so daring, that it hath had a loud cry? Yea, their case hath been such as did justify the Lord's procedure against them, even in the consciences of all on-lookers, that he did it not without much cause. 3. Is it not easy for such as are wise to know the times, to see night coming on a land, when sin is at some dreadful height, by considering the word and the Lord's usual way with a people in such a case? Yea, hath there not then been some special forewarnings, a more than ordinary impression of judgment upon the spirits of the godly? The hiding of many of them in the grave, which as threatning presages, hath shewed the near approach of a stroke. 4. There doth not usually want even some *Noah* or *Jonas*, the ministers of God sent forth to threaten, who as watchmen upon the wall are discerning hazard at a distance, yea, with an observable pressure then upon their spirit, and a more than ordinary agreement amongst themselves to cry out, and give the people warning, when the time of judgmenr hath been drawing near.

II. It is clear *there are some special evils and sins of a time, which we find the word most dreadfully doth threaten*, yea, in a peculiar way it doth put a mark upon them, that though the Lord should pass by many infirmities in a church, and people professing his name; yet for such, and such sins as we find, in *Amos* i. 2. *he will not turn away the punishment thereof*, but hath solemnly declared, by his truth and faithfulness, that these shall not pass without some visible mark, even before the world, of his anger: now in this the scripture is clear, and lets us see there are some sins more particularly threatned, some land destroying sins that have as it were the mark set on them, which do especially provoke the holy indignation and jealousie of God, such as *idolatry*, corrupting the worship of God; *perjury, and covenant-breaking, shall they break my covenant, and escape, saith the Lord*, *Ezek*, xvii. 15. also departing from God, and his way, for this the land shall be desolate as in *Jerem.* xi. 12, 13. yea blood guiltiness which the earth shall not cover, and for which the sword shall not depart, even from the house and family of *David*, 2 *Sam.* xii. 10. Now to evidence the accomplishment hereof, I shall point at some things most obvious to the observation of every time, how terribly the Lord useth to plead for such things, and by some exemplary stroke and judgment point them out, as we find them particularly set by themselves in the word, and threatnings thereof.

1. How in these sins, thus marked, men may see how their judgments use not wholly to be deferred to another world, but though much is oft passed here, and deferred to that last and great judgment, yet, upon such sins

the Lord hath put ſome mark of his diſpleaſure, even in this life. 2. That for theſe he uſeth to contend, before the ſun, and in the view of men; his judgments are indeed oft ſecret, and do conſume as a moth, but upon ſuch ſins we may frequently ſee, ſome publick, viſible ſtroke is made to follow, that the world cannot paſs without a remark. 3. That the Lord alſo uſeth to be a very ſwift witneſs againſt ſuch evils, for as we find the oppreſſion of the church hath a loud cry, and the blood of the ſaints *a how long?* It is alſo ſeen theſe forementioned ſins do much haſten judgment, ſo as ſeldom that generation paſſeth away without ſome witneſs thereto; it is rarely found that ſome great revolt of a people from God, and breaking covenant with him, doth lie long by unpuniſhed, nor doth the hoary head of the violent and bloody man go oft to the grave in peace. 4. That theſe ſins uſe to be followed with ſome very dreadful and eminent ſtroke, which have made the land deſolate, their cities ſometime waſt, and a ruinous heap, yea, houſes great and fair to be without inhabitants; ſo as men have with aſtoniſhment enquired, why is all this come to paſs; and it was eaſy to anſwer, even for ſuch, and ſuch evils hath the Lord done this, according to his word. 5. That a divine hand uſeth to be moſt diſcernible in the puniſhment of ſuch ſins becauſe of a very clear reſemblance betwixt them and the ſtroke, which hath forced their own conſcience, as well as of onlookers to confeſs the righteouſneſs of God therein. 6. That the Lord will put ſome mark of his anger on the choiceſt of his ſervants for any acceſſion to ſuch ſins, theſe to whom he hath given their ſoul for a prey, have yet got a ſore outward ſtroke, upon ſuch an account, which hath followed them to the grave; for this the ſword ſhall not depart from *David*'s houſe: *idolatry* rent the kingdom from the poſterity of *Solomon*. *Jonas* ſhall not eſcape for his rebellion, yea, God was wroth with *Moſes*, and no intreaty ſhall hinder his dying in the wilderneſs. I may add, hath not the Lord's controverſy on this ground even reacht their poſterity, which may ſhew that theſe threatnings are ſad earneſt, and ſuch ſins are not more particularly pointed at in the word, than they have been in after ages made exemplary in judgment.

III. *A people's lukewarmneſs, their ſlighting of the goſpel*, and not receiving the love of the truth, we find ſadly threatned in the word, *Rev.* iii. 15. 16. *Theſſ.* ii. 10, 11. and truly we muſt ſay they have not fallen to the ground in any age without an accompliſhment, as frequent obſervation can witneſs. Firſt, how a people's entring upon a religious way, their purſuing a form of reformation, and not thorough for God therein, but on carnal grounds, hath thus put them in a worſe condition than before, for truly men's hypocriſy, in going about a good work doth threaten more, than the performance thereof doth promiſe. *Jehu* got a temporal reward, but his poſterity muſt at length reckon for all the blood of *Jezreel*. 2. That no people uſe to be further from getting good of the goſpel than ſuch who have been under moſt clear and greateſt convictions, ſo as it is found, there is oft more acceſs to gain amongſt the *ſavages*, than theſe who have ſit their day while the tide did flow, yea, miniſters have found moſt diſcouragement to labour in theſe parts where the word hath been long preached with power. 3. It is ſeen, how light not improved will turn a people more groſs, and is uſually followed with ſome remarkable growth in ſin, that the more the word doth put a reſtraint on men's corruption, the more it rageth; ſo as it may be obſerved what a very black dye and colour, the powerful preaching of the goſpel hath put upon a people, as a viſible mark of judgment on ſuch who profit not thereby. 4. Is it not ſeen how men's formality in the matters of God hath been oft puniſhed even with the taking away of the form?

form? Yea, that ſeldom error and deluſion doth want a harveſt amongſt a people who receive not the truth in love. 5. Hath not ſlighting of the goſpel been at laſt followed with ſome viſible reſtraint and inhibition, both upon the ordinances and diſpenſers thereof, a judicial withdrawing of the ſpirit, as to the work of converſion and conviction, whereby the Lord doth plainly ceaſe to be a reprover to ſuch, yea, even ſaith, *bind up the law, and ſeal the teſtimony.* 4. *The word doth alſo threaten carnal ſecurity* (a diſeaſe whereof the church is oft in great hazard) yea, we find it holds forth a certain connection betwixt ſpiritual judgments upon a people, and ſome outward ſtrokes to follow thereon, that theſe who are under that firſt woe and plague upon their ſpirits, are then near to ſome judgment upon their perſons, and may expect a ſharp wakning; *in hearing they ſhall not underſtand,* &c. but the cloſe is, *until their cities be conſumed without inhabitants, and there be an utter deſolation,* yea, we find judgment doth begin as a moth in that of *Hoſ.* v. but in the 14. it doth turn at laſt to be a lion. We may truly ſay the fulfilling of this hath in all ages of the church been obvious. 1. That as the firſt part of the church's deliverance is uſually ſpiritual, ſo it is found the firſt ſtep of judgment, and the execution thereof againſt a people, hath been upon their ſpirits; that ſerious diſcerners of the time might know that the night was faſt coming on, and ſome ſad outward ſtroke on a land, by the abounding of ſpiritual judgments. 2. It is clear the moſt dreadful ſtrokes that ever come on a particular church, do uſually find it in ſuch a caſe, judicially hardned, and under many warnings plagued with ſecurity; thus did the flood find the old world, and before that deſolating ſtroke on *Jeruſalem* by the *Romans,* were not the *Jews* in ſuch a caſe. *Salvain* can tell how it was with the *African churches,* before that dreadful inundation of the *Goths* and *Vandals,* yea, the church's records in all ages do witneſs that before any ſad ſtroke or perſecution came upon a people, a deep ſleep and lethargy hath been previous thereto; gray hairs might have been ſeen upon them, and the word doth even ſhew that this will be the laſt diſeaſe whereof the church ſhall be ſick before the great day of the Lord. 3. It is alſo ſeen how ſpiritual judgments when they grow upon a people, make great diſpatch, and do quickly ripen for ſome further ſtroke, that when men have run down their conſcience and are paſt reproof of the word, going on from evil to worſe, the caſe cometh then to be clear, and ready for the final diſcuſſion of the proceſs. 5. *The word doth denounce woe againſt the troublers of the church, and theſe who are her perſecutors, that the Lord ſhall recompence tribulation to ſuch, and plead with her oppreſſors,* the accompliſhment whereof hath been truly manifeſt, yea to the obſervation even of the world. *Iſa.* x. 5. 2 *Theſ.* i. 6. 1. That eminent oppreſſors of the church have ſeldom gone out of the world without ſome remark of divine anger upon them; ſurely if there were a record of ſuch inſtances that in every age hath been conſpicuous, men ſhould be forced to ſee and ſay that the moſt noted enemies and perſecutors of the ſaints have been alſo the moſt convincing and noted examples of judgment in the time. 2. That the church's ſuffering uſeth to go before a day of vengeance on the inſtruments thereof; we find *Jehu* got an outward reward for executing the judgment of God on his enemies; but as for theſe men who have been the rod of the church it hath been ſeen that they have not long wanted ſome ſcourge as ſore upon themſelves, as they have been to his people, and that at laſt theſe have payed dear for their ſervice. 3. We may ſee how this alſo doth help to finiſh the controverſy of God with men, and their houſes, that for this he hath taken many away in the midſt of their days,

days, and made them ceaſe to be, who would not ceaſe to trouble the church, while they had a being; yea, that he had taken them in his own hand, whom men could not reach, and made their down-caſting in the midſt of themſelves. 6. *Doth not the ſcripture threaten carnal confidence in a people, the putting of their truſt in man or in any outward inſtruments, Jer.* xvii. 5. 6, 17. To clear the accompliſhment whereof, let us but compare the word, and the church's obſervation together, and we will find. 1. That outward means have never more miſcarried than when moſt promiſing, and when there was greateſt expectation from the ſame, yea, that very eminent inſtruments when much leaned to, have been obſervably blaſted, and made to ſhrink under ſuch a burden. 2. That theſe whom the Lord had made much uſe of, yea, honoured to be great inſtruments in the ſervice of the church, have oft had ſome diſcernible blot, to reprove men's overlading of inſtruments with their eſteem; a *Tertullian*, an *Origen* in ancient times, yea, even a *Luther*, in theſe latter ages muſt go with ſome halt to the grave. 3. That many who have been uſeful in the church for a time, the Lord doth oft lay by, yea, maketh not uſe of them to the end, but the laſt may be made firſt, and truly that exceſs in men's eſteem, putting a further weight on ſome means, than they could bear, hath oft helped to render many uſeleſs. 4. Is it not alſo ſeen, how one extremity is thus plagued with an other? None more ready to ſhrink in a day of trouble, than ſuch who at a diſtance ſeem'd moſt daring, yea, none more ready to fall in that exceſs of undervaluing inſtruments, than theſe who have moſt exceeded upon the other hand. 7. *Do we not find the word threaten, and in a ſpecial way point at corrupt miniſters, unfaithful watchmen* who give not warning to the church, theſe ſhepherds that feed themſelves, but not the flock, the leaders of a people that cauſe them to err, and by their practice to ſtumble at the law, *Mal.* ii. 3. 9. The accompliſhment whereof hath in all ages been very diſcernible. Firſt, how ſuch have uſually been moſt noted as the greateſt and moſt violent enemies which the church hath at any time had, yea, that no courſe hath been ſo evil and groſs that hath wanted ſome of theſe to help it on, whoſe hatred, and perſecution of the godly hath been found to exceed the moſt openly profane and profligate in that time. 2. That as they are particularly threatned above others in the word, ſo they get alſo ſome remarkable caſt above others in their judgment, and having once loſt their favour become vile and loathſome even to the worſt of men, are contemptible in the eyes of ſuch whom they ſeek in a ſinful way to pleaſe, yea have a worſe favour, than the prophaneſt wretches, that being verified in them, *corruptio optimi, peſſima.* 3. That theſe do ſeldom make a good retreat from an evil way; ſo as it is an uſual obſervation, *it is rare for church men to repent, or a fallen ſtar to ſhine again.* 4. Are not ſuch oft ſmitten even in their gifts, which we may ſee wither and dry up upon them while not faithfully improved, yea, to the very conviction of their hearers to have loſt that edge which once they had in their miniſtry? 5. I muſt add another remark (though I deſire to deal with fear and much tenderneſs in ſuch an application of the judgment of God) how the Lord doth oft put ſome note of his wrath on the children and off-ſpring of unfaithful miniſters, that it hath been ſeen none more wretched and groſs; whereto as their evil practice, and example hath been a ſpecial help, ſo likewiſe are they thus puniſhed of the Lord, who did not ſeek to beget children to him, by the word, but through their way did rather cauſe many to err and fall.

THE THIRD BRANCH.

HAving ſpoke ſomethiug how the ſcripture both as to the promiſes and threatnings thereof, is evidently fulfilled in the Lord's ordinary way of procedure with his church, I would a little further follow this argument, *how this alſo hath a manifold accompliſhment, even in theſe moſt ſtrange and dark paſſages of providence, whereat men are ready to ſtumble* and accuſe the ſpotleſs righteouſneſs of God, and his faithfulneſs therein; but if we lay them to that meaſure and line of the word, which is ſtretched over the whole work of providence, we will ſee how well theſe do agree, and anſwer one to the other, yea that all the paths wherein God walketh towards his church and people, are ſurely mercy and truth. To clear this I ſhall point at ſome footſteps of the providence of God in the world, and about the church which would ſeem moſt dark, yea a contradiction to his word and promiſe, but are plain and manifeſt, if weighed in the ballance of the ſanctuary, where we may have a ſatisfying look and reſolution of theſe things, which otherways would be too hard for us to underſtand, and may ſee, how ſtraight theſe paths are which we thought crooked; yea, how eaſy and paſſable, the greateſt deeps of providence would be, both as to God's way with his church, and in our own particular caſe, when once they are ſet over againſt the word. I ſhall touch this a little in theſe following inſtances.

1. *It may ſeem ſtrange how the church's trouble and ſtrait is oft ſeen to encreaſe, with the firſt ſtirrings of her deliverance*; yea, when ſome remarkable mercy and deliverance is in the bringing forth, the firſt ſtep thereof would ſeem to put her further back, and in a worſe condition than before. This is indeed a piece of the Lord's way with his church which in many inſtances may be witneſſed, but let us take the word along therewith, and we will find. 1. How the church is oft at the brink of the grave even when her caſe is upon a turn, and how it is congruous to his way (*whoſe paths are in the deep waters, who cloatheth himſelf with darkneſs, that men ſhould not find any thing after him*, or lay down abſolute concluſions concerning his dealing) that the motions of providence ſhould be oft ſo perplexed and various. 2. Did not the caſe of the church in *Egypt* ſeem much worſe, their burdens double upon them, even when their deliverance was breaking up? 3. *Joſeph* to be ſold as a ſlave, and in *Egypt* turned in to a dungeon, would ſeem ſteps of providence, very unlike the thing which God was driving at thereby, and yet we ſee how kindly theſe did work towards the ſame. 4. The church in *Micah*. iv. 10. when ſhe was even at the door next to a deliverance, her tryal was even at the greateſt height, *be in pain, and labour to bring forth, for ye ſhall go to Babylon and there be delivered*: but ſoreſt pangs in the birth do uſually promiſe the beſt iſſue. 5. It was the ſtep of the providence of God, which of all ſeemed moſt dreadful to the church in *Eſter*, the ſealing of the decree, and ſending it forth to root out the whole ſeed of the *Jews*, while *Haman* ſtill flouriſhed, but lo this was the very ſtep that wrought moſt throughly for her deliverance, and is not a wet mourning ſeed-time a ſcripture-preſage of a good harveſt.

II. *The ſore interruptions which a peopl's endeavours for reformation, and to promote the kingdom of Chriſt have met with*, even when ſet about with a clear call, yea, ſolemn and ſerious engagements to God, would ſeem ſtrange, and a ſhaking piece of providence; and truly this is oft ſeen, as an uſual attendant on reformation, how unſuperable like difficulties, and unexpected lets do grow up in the way thereof; thus when *Luther*, and other inſtruments were raiſed up in *Germany*, to purſue the church's reformation, what cruel edicts were then ſet forth to give it a daſh? Diviſion among them-

ſelves, the riſing up of the *Boors* and *Anabaptiſts*: what a pure, and through reformation was on foot under *Edward* the ſixth in *England*, and what a dreadful ſtorm did quickly break it up for that time? And I would add, what the preſent caſe of the church in *Britain* and *Ireland* may at this day witneſs, where once the Lord ſo eminently appeared in a begun reformation, which now is at ſo great a ſtand, but let us go in to the ſcripture with this, and we will find. 1. There is a vive portraicture of providence in the affairs of the church held forth in that viſion which *Ezekiel* had of the wheels at the river *Chebar*, whoſe myſterious motions and turnings ſo croſs one to the other, without any diſcord therein, as to the end, to which they were directed, both witneſs the rational, and wiſe conduct of providence: the Lord's work about his church is a moſt ſhadowed and elaborate piece, which men cannot ſee, before their eye, as they ſee behind upon a review, while ordinary cauſes do oft vary in their operation, yea, go out of the common road, but ſcripture will make this very plain. 2. Was not *Nehemiah*, *Ezra* and *Zerobabel* at their work and duty, and had an expreſs call for building of the temple, yet, how great, and frequent interruptions did they find, ſometimes environed with difficulties, *Zach.* iv. 7. *Who art thou great mountain before Zerobabel?* yea, they were put to hold the ſword and build, to watch and work at once, becauſe of their enemies. 3. What a very ſore backſet was the church at *Hab.* iii. *Revive thy work O Lord in the midſt of the years*; this was both a great and long interruption, yea, do we not find her almoſt at a *non-plus* with a query which no viſible appearance could anſwer, *by whom ſhall Jacob ariſe for he is ſmall?* 4. We find a ſpecial reformation ſet on foot by *Hezekiah* with a ſolemn covenant, by the princes, prieſts and body of the people, with a ſetting up of the pure worſhip and ordinances of God, but lo a ſharp ſtorm is ſoon after by *Sennacherib*, yea, *Hezekiah* ſcarcely is in his grave, when his ſon doth bring in corruption and perſecution both at once; and when the chriſtian church in the times of the apoſtles begin to flouriſh, ſucceſs following the goſpel, did not a ſad interruption and ſcattering follow? *Act.* viii. 5. This is promiſed that *Zion*'s walls ſhall even in troubleſome times be built, and her being brought to a heap of rubbiſh was but making way for a further advance, that in the building of her again the Lord might appear in his glory; and is it not clear, that Chriſt coming in the goſpel and power thereof to purge his church, and carry on a reformation *Mal.* iii. 4. proveth a ſearching and trying time which men cannot endure, for the word and clear diſcovery of ſin, and other ſhaking diſpenſations which do uſually attend ſuch times and torment them who dwell on the earth, yea, and the devil, and corruption of men aloft, with all rage to oppoſe the ſame.

III. *That a ſad overclouding and darkneſs ſhould come on a land, after moſt ſpecial manifeſtations of the power and glory of God therein*, and that a time of the goſpel with much light ſhould be ſo near a forerunner of wrath and judgment, would ſeem a ſtrange piece of providence, and cauſe a ſerious enquiry how ſuch eminent appearances of God for a people, ſuch great confirmations, obſervations, obſervable ſucceſs for a time, with many ſignal encouragements, ſhould all ſeem to reſolve in a deſolating ſtroke, and ruin? This may be inſtanced in that *proteſtant* war in *France* where inſtruments were remarkably raiſed, fitted of the Lord for the ſervice of that time, had much of his preſence and countenance, yet to reſolve thus in a bloody maſſacre; likewiſe theſe confederate *German Princes*, *Saxony and Landgrave of Heſſe*, men eminent for piety, carried forth with much zeal for God, for defence of the truth, yea, in the beginning of that war having

many promiſing encouragements, yet, remarkably deſerted of the Lord with very ſad like conſequences following the ſame. Let us conſider alſo the late *Bohemian* war, ſtated upon neceſſary defence of religion and liberty, and at firſt attended with ſome ſmiling providences, ſhould reſolve into ſo great a deſolation and ruin: yea, the church of *Ireland*, O, what a dreadful maſſacre of the proteſtants there did quickly follow one of the moſt ſolemn times of the power of God and outpowering of the ſpirit that we ever heard of ſince the days of the apoſtles. I confeſs this may have a ſtrange aſpect, and is a part of the marvelous ways of the Lord, but when we take it into the word, we will find there is no jar, or diſcord here, for, 1. It might ſeem as ſtrange and aſtoniſhing what *Baruch* got from the Lord in anſwer to his complaint, *Jerem.* xlv. that he would pluck up what he had planted, and caſt down that which he had built, for a work to be thus thrown down, where the Lord had once ſo eminently appeared, and given his people many confirmations, might then occaſion great thoughts of heart, yet the unſpotted righteouſneſs of God, and his truth was apparent therein; yea, after that diſcourſe, and all theſe large promiſes, which Chriſt gave his diſciples in that of *John* vi. we find all is ſhut up with that, *the hour is coming, and now is, that ye ſhall be ſcattered.* 2. What ſtrange providences did meet the church in the wilderneſs, ſometime brought back to the *Red-ſea*, tryed with hunger and nakedneſs, conſumed with various ſtrokes, and many years wandering until moſt of that generation, who came out of *Egypt*, filled their graves in the journey, and yet this was after moſt eminent confirmations, and as clear ſigns of God's preſence as ever a people had. 3. We find a publick reformation moſt zealouſly proſecute by *Joſias*, which looked like the renewed eſpouſals of that land with God, by a ſolemn covenant, yet, quickly after, night came on that land with a long captivity, and *Joſias* did fall by the ſword. 4. Was there not a bright ſun-blink, and flouriſhing plantation of the goſpel in *Judea* a little before the deſolation of that land by the *Romans*, yea, we will find it clear from the word that times of much light and reformation do much ſooner ripen for a ſtroke than other times. 5. It is very manifeſt that particular churches have their day where the goſpel hath it's appointed work, and their ſtroke at laſt may reach the length of removing the candleſtick, I truly think that ſad inſtance of *Bohemia*'s caſe may have this obſervable in it, that it had longer day, and enjoyment of the light even from the times of *John Hus*, and *Jerome of Prague* which was near an hundred years before there was any day-break on other parts, ſo that we would conſider if their night did come ſoon on, that their day was alſo much longer, yea, the ſtroke might meet with the ebb of the tide, when their harveſt was much gathered in, under ſo long a continuance of the goſpel, though I dare not think, the Lord's work is utterly extinct there, but that *Bohemia*'s dead and withered root hath life yet in it and ſhall once again bud forth.

IV. *Is it not uſually ſeen when judgement cometh on a land, that the godly get the firſt ſtroke?* But let us alſo conſider this in the word, where it is clear. 1. That judgment muſt begin at the houſe of God, and the green tree; and that the church's trouble and perſecution is a forerunner of vengeance on her adverſaries, do we not find, there is a cup of the judgment of God? And O the laſt is of a ſtrong compoſition, for the wine is red and mixed, and the dreg very thick whic his reſerved for the troublers of the church, and for ſuch who are at eaſe in a day of her grief, and truly they have the advantage that drink firſt, *Bleſt are they whom thou chaſteneſt*, &c. *That they may reſt in the day of their adverſity, until the pit be digged for the wicked*, yea, *Rev.* iii. 10. we find keeping of the word of patience, which doth import

port ſuffering to the church, goeth before a more univerſal ſtroke; and in that day proveth the ſafety and protection of the people of God. 2. It is alſo clear that men may be raiſed up of the Lord, and followed with ſucceſs, when he hath them for a rod to his church, but that at laſt *Aſhur* the rod of my wrath will I caſt in the fire, ſaith the Lord, it is truly an evidence of great wrath upon a party to be made the rod, and executioners of judgment upon the people of God, for they ſhall pay for it, by ſome ſadder ſtroke than any trouble or ſuffering, whereof they have been inſtruments.

V. *That proſperity, and ſucceſs ſhould follow ſometimes the worſt of men in an evil courſe and cauſe*, ſuch a concurrence, and ſeries of providence, as ſeemeth to ſmile on them even to the bringing of their ſinful devices to paſs, while the people of God have been made to fall in a juſt quarrel before their adverſary, would ſeem an aſtoniſhing providence, but let us lay it foregainſt the word, and there we will ſee. 1. *That there is a proſperity which tendeth to deſtruction*, Prov. i. 32. *The tabernacles of the robbers proſper*, Job xii. 6. and they that provoke God are ſecure, into whoſe hands he bringeth abundantly, but they do not ſee that wickedneſs is its own puniſhment, and how it is a dreadful ſtroke to thrive in an ill courſe. Was not the church ſhaken with ſuch a providence, *Mal.* iii. 15. Yea, tempted to call the proud happy, but in *ver.* 18. They were taught from further obſervation to diſcern, and to put a difference between the righteous and the wicked. 2. Do we not find that even the ſigns and predictions of falſe Prophets in favours of a ſinful way may come to paſs, *Deut.* xiii. 1, 2. whereof the church is warned, and God's intent in the ſame cleared, that it is for the tryal of his people, whither they will love, and fear the Lord, and cleave to his way, when providence would ſeem to ſhine on a crooked path. 3. Did not ſucceſs for a time attend *Abſalom? Iſrael* as one man went after him, yea, the friends and counſellors of *David*; a fair wind did alſo favour *Haman* in his eſſay to ruin the church. *Jeremy* is almoſt ſhaken with this, *yea they have taken root, yea, they grow, and bring forth fruit*, but is not this at laſt uſually found ominous before a ſtorm? though the brutiſh man knoweth not, nor fools lay it to heart for what the wicked doth oft ſpring, and flouriſh; I would add *Iſrael*'s falling before *Benjamin*, it was an aſtoniſhing like providence; and *Habakuck* was put to a ſtand with ſuch a thing, why the Lord lookt on, while the wicked devoured the righteous; yea, *Joſhua* was to cry out in an amazement, O Lord what ſhall I ſay, when *Iſrael* turneth their back before their enemies? But we have alſo the Lord's intent therein witneſſed by his word, that this is to humble and prove his people, that he may do them good in the latter end, and thus he beateth them off from all carnal grounds of confidence, he woundeth them to a cure, that by bringing them low, he may raiſe, and fit them for a further mercy.

VI. *What great diſappointments hath the church met with*, when outward grounds of confidence, and ordinary means have been moſt promiſing, as it is a thing moſt true, ſo it may ſeem ſtrange at the firſt look, but let us bring it to the word and the caſe will be there anſwered, *Deut.* xxxii. *Why ſhould one chaſe a thouſand, but becauſe their rock hath ſold them*, and therefore their ſtrength is gone with the Lord's departing from them, for, when a time of judgment is come, even the mighty then find not their hands, counſel faileth to the ancient, ordinary means bring not forth their wonted effects, which *Solomon* ſheweth and after ages have oft ſeen, the race not ever to the ſwift nor the battel to the ſtrong, it is alſo clear from the word, how threatning a condition that is, for the people of God to be much carried out after means, or lifted up therewith, *Iſaiah* xxx. they will ride on horſes, and this ſhall be

their

their punishment, but on the other hand the Lord's way, in bringing forth his greatest works hath not been by might and power, but oft by means most improbable, and unexpected.

VII. *The long continuance of a heavy afflicting rod on the church, without the appearance of deliverance,* or any return to much wrestling and prayer on that account, may seem a strange step in God's way with his people, but the word will answer us in such a case where it is clear. 1. That there are no bounds in the scripture set to the continuance of a trial, it doth not tell how long a sharp storm may lye on, either as to the church, or any particular christian; for it is a part of the Lord's secret counsel, but not of that which is revealed, it is enough that we know from it that men cannot make the church's suffering longer than God's time. 2. It was a long term that of *Israel*'s tryal in *Egypt* and after that under the captivity, three hundred and ninety days must the church lye on her left side. O how many a sad day, and wearisome night was there in that word, lxx. weeks are determined upon thy people, and city *Jerusalem*. 3. Have not the saints under a long trouble been almost the length of blasphemy in their complaints, *Isaiah* xl. 27. *My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment past over from my God. Daniel*, how pressing with the Lord was he that he would hearken, and do, and not defer, and yet the return cometh not until the first year of *Cyrus*; yea, that cry of the altar, *How long*, doth it not even get a dilatory answer? For thus the Lord doth oft interpose his long suffering for some time, betwixt his people, and avenging of them. 4. It is also clear that there are many prayers before the throne, the returns whereof are suspended, and an answer to christians, in their particular, until that time when God shall build up *Zion*, and then the prayer of the destitute shall be remembred even as to christians private enlargement, when the church shall be raised up. 5. We know the church's enemies must have time to ripen, and it is not a storm of a few days that will purge away the filth of the daughter of *Zion*, too soon letting out of a sore may cause it undercot and gather new matter, and truly the word can resove us in this, that one minute sooner than God's time would not be his peoples mercy.

VIII. It is oft seen *when there is some remarkable work of God on foot in a land, and some great out pouring of the spirit, how Satan setteth up some usual counterfeit thereof*, and bringeth forth something of his work in such a time with a very strange resemblance of the same; thus, with the preaching of the freedom of grace, and a clear discovery of that truth, did *Libertinism* under a very specious pretext, spring up. Thus we find the *Anabaptist* and *Antinomian* party set up in *Germany*, to run down a church-reformation under the shew of a more pure and spiritual way; and of late did not *Familism* in *England*, under pretext of a more spiritual dispensation cast off the very letter of the scripture, turning it over in an *allegory*, and in behalf of the liberty of propheſying, cry down a standing ministry; but though this may seem strange, yet, the scripture is very clear concerning it. 1. That even Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, and in no shape proveth more dangerous to the church. 2. That the most dreadful errors, and a false way will oft come near to the choicest exercises of the saints, and have such a resemblance to the same, that if it were possible the very elect should be deceived. 3. Was there not a *Simon Magus* with false miracles set up over against the apostles, and when the time of the *Messias* drew near, did not then a *Theudas*, and *Judas* of *Galilee*, break forth to amuse the people? We find also an altar from *Damascus*, set up beside that which was shewed to *Moses* the servant of the Lord in the mount, yea, when *Moses* and *Aaron*

were giving *Pharaoh* a ſign, and did ſhew forth the marvelous power of God, then did the *Magicians* caſt down their rod alſo to counterfeit the ſame, by which the heart of *Pharaoh* was hardned.

IX. *The abounding of much error and hereſy, now in the time of the goſpel,* with that ſwift growth thereof, which is oft ſeen where the light moſt clearly ſhineth, would ſeem ſtrange, yea, is a thing whereat many are ready to ſtumble, and thus to challenge the way of God: but is not the ſcripture in this clearly verified, ſo that this piece of providence which is ſo ſhaking to many, if we take the word along with it, might be a very convincing confirmation to us of the ſame, for, 1. We find the apoſtles, yea, Chriſt himſelf hath given expreſs warning thereof, that this ſhould be one of the ſpecial and greateſt trials of the chriſtian church, whereof the *Old Teſtament*, we find, doth little mention, that trial not concerning the church then ſo much, as theſe after-times under the *Meſſias*'s kingdom, wherein the event may be clearly ſeen, to anſwer theſe predictions, which are ſo frequent thereof in the *New Teſtament*. 2. Doth not the event alſo anſwer the word as to that particular way and method, how error ſhould be propogated, which is there clearly foretold, by ſubtil undermining, under the pretext of liberty with plauſible inſinuations, ſo that we muſt ſay not only the matter but with all theſe diſcernible tokens, even upon the manner, the word is made out, 3. Do we not find this ſhould be a judgment on men who receive not the love of the truth, and that after flouriſhing times of the church, when he who rideth on the white horſe is gone forth, the black horſe and his rider doth quickly follow, and truly it is ſeen that in the time of hotteſt perſecutions, the church hath not been ſo much troubled with this adverſary, as when ſhe did begin to get reſt, and moſt of outward liberty, nor yet ſo at the firſt breaking up of the goſpel, as after ſome time of its continuance. 4. Doth not the event likewiſe thus anſwer the word, that in the breaking out of hereſy in the church, a ſpirit of error, the depths and mighty working of Satan ſhould be ſeen, which I am ſure is undeniable, how manifeſt the interpoſing of theſe powers of darkneſs is therein, if we conſider, 1. Its Its marvelous diſpatch and growth like a plague, and the arrow that flieth by day. 2. With what a diſcernible fury and violence men are thus driven, as with an impetuous current, yea, oft a change on their very natural temper is ſeen moſt evidently. 3. Theſe monſtruous and horrid things, which are oft brought forth, may ſhew whoſe hand is in ſuch a birth. 4. That the uſual tendency of error is to looſneſs in practice, which as it poiſoneth the ſpring, and corrupteth the leading faculty the judgement, ſo we ſee, it moveth towards the vital ſpirits, and doth influence the converſation; and the leproſy in the head breaketh forth in blains through the whole body. 5. And do we not ſee how many groſs and profane have been carried with this ſpate, how few get leave to ſtand, but are ſtill carried from one ſtep to another, and it is clear the world did never put out its rage ſo much againſt that way, as it hath done againſt the truth, except when ſome outward intereſt maketh it a quarrel.

X. *Theſe great ſhakings and commotions that uſe to attend the goſpel, when it cometh in power to a land,* may alſo ſeem ſtrange, yea, are ready to make many ſtumble. But is not the word verified herein, what great ſtirs and trouble did afflict the church after great light in pouring out of the ſpirit, *Joel*, ii. 29. we may there likewiſe ſee, how this giveth the world an alarum, maketh the kings, and great men of the earth run together, to hinder the riſing of Chriſt's kingdom, *Pſal.* ii. 3. *let us break his bonds*, &c. for truly in all ages Chriſt's riſing in the goſpel hath caſt a terror to its enemies, that this ſhould be their fall and ruin, when the apoſtle hath an effectual door opened in his miniſtry,

miniſtry he hath alſo much oppoſition thereto, but on the other hand all is ſtill and quiet while the ſtrong man doth keep the houſe, yea, it is clear from the word, that where the goſpel cometh there is a red flag hung forth, that if men will not receive the ſame and ſubject to him who rideth on the white horſe, one ſhall come after whoſe work is to take peace from the earth, to put the world in a flame, and to accompliſh the judgment of a deſpiſed goſpel, who ſhall divide betwixt the husband and wife, the parents and children, wherein our bleſſed Lord Jeſus is very expreſs, *Matth.* x. 34. *I come not to ſend peace on the earth, but rather a ſword*, which might ſeem ſtrange from him; but it is to tell men if they will not embrace the offer of his peace they ſhall not have peace among themſelves, for the meſſage of the goſpel muſt either be the beſt, or the worſt ſight that ever a land had.

XI. *This may ſeem ſtrange how in all ages men of greateſt parts, and learning, are ſuch uſual oppoſers of the truth*, yea, how the moſt ſober, and calm will even appear violent in their way, the more the goſpel is followed with power; but, O! how well doth this anſwer the ſcripture, for the wiſdom of this world is enmity to God, 1 *Cor.* iii. 19. not many wiſe according to the fleſh comparatively, with thoſe who hate the truth; of all the beaſts of the field was not the ſerpent Satan's choice; and if there be an *Achitophel* in the time, at him he will have a ſpecial pull, to ſuch the ſimplicity of the goſpel is fooliſhneſs, whereat they ſtumble; to ſuch Chriſt is a rock of offence, we find the light doth torment them that dwell in the earth, will cauſe men blaſpheme and diſcover that, which would not appear, whilſt they got leave to enjoy their ſinful peace without diſturbance.

XII. *Theſe ſtrange judgments which may ſometimes befal the ſaints in their outward lot*, yea ſometimes attended with ſome very aſtoniſhing circumſtances would at the firſt look put men to a ſtand and to challenge the holy way of God. But let us weigh it in that ballance of the ſcripture, and we will find. 1. That ſuch hath been the complaint of the ſaints, the Lord's wounding them with the wound of a cruel one; what a ſtrange query is that in *Lament.* ii. 20. *Behold and conſider, to whom thou haſt done this, ſhall the women eat the fruit of their womb? ſhall the prieſt and prophet be ſlain in the ſanctuary of the Lord?* Yea, did it not even to *Solomon* ſeem ſtrange, *Eccleſ.* viii. 14. that there are juſt men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked. 2. It looked like ſome ſtrange ſtroke which forced *David* to this complaint, my enemies caſt iniquity on me, and ſay an evil diſeaſe, or as the origiual readeth it, a thing of *Belial* cleaveth to him; we find *Joſias* fell by the ſword; *Eli*, with one ſtroke hath his ſons killed, his daughter in-law dying, and himſelf falling from his ſeat, and breaking his neck; yea *Aaron* hath both his ſons killed before his eyes, by an immediate ſtroke from the Lord. 3. The word doth alſo ſhew, there is no jar betwixt this and the tenor of the covenant which God hath made with his people, to puniſh their tranſgreſſion with rods, yea, ſometimes by a ſtrange rod, while he taketh not his loving kindneſs from them, and do we not find that a grievous trial may afflict the ſaints which the world would think a dreadful judgment, for great ſufferings may be ordered of the Lord, to give ſome great examples thereby, we have heard of the patience of *Job*, and have ſeen the end of the Lord.

XIII. *The groſs falling of theſe who have ſometimes ſhined with much luſtre in the church* may be aſtoniſhing, but here alſo we may ſee the ſcripture made out, for it is clear. Firſt, that few inſtances of the moſt eminent of the ſaints, we have on ſcripture record, but there is ſome particular ſpot and blemiſh alſo noted, a *Noah*, *Lot*, *Moſes* and *David*, yea, under the *New Teſtament*

Teſtament that great apoſtle, whoſe denial of his maſter is ſet forth, to ſhew how far ſome may fall whom grace will again reſtore, and make up. 2. It is there clear, that ſome of underſtanding do fall for a judgment to others, that ſuch who will ſtumble, whoſe prejudice at the way of God is their choice, may thus further fall and be broken. 3. The bleſſed meaning and intent hereof we may there alſo read to alarm men to watchfulneſs, that ſuch who ſtand may take heed leſt they fall; to warrant alſo their adventuring on the grace of God; that none ſhould fear to come in after ſuch eminent examples.

XIV. *The contingency of events*, that we ſee many things in ſuch a caſual way fall out in the world, as by chance only, without the rational conduct of providence (which doth infallibly direct things to a certain end) this might at the firſt look, put men to a ſtand, yea, would ſeem to give atheiſts ſome ſhadow to ſay, *how doth God ſee, or doth the God of* Jacob *regard?* But upon a more ſerious enquiry ſetting the word over againſt it, O what a ſweet exerciſe ſhould it be to conſider. 1. That though the providence of God in things here beneath moveth ſuitably to the nature of inferior cauſes, whether neceſſary, free, or contingent, not violenting them, or otherways making uſe of them, but according to their nature, ſo that though the event be neceſſary, and infallible, with a reſpect to the firſt cauſe, the determined counſel of God, it is nevertheleſs contingent in reſpect of its neareſt cauſe; yet moſt caſual motions do certainly fall under that comprehenſive reach of providence, that even a ſparrow falleth not to the ground by gueſs, *Rebeccah* cometh not with her pitcher to the well nor *Ruth* to glean in *Boaz*'s field at an adventure, but in theſe the providence of God muſt reach its end, and cannot miſcarry. 2. That theſe things which to us would ſeem moſt caſual, we oft ſee in their tendency and product, have been intended by the Lord, as a ſpecial mean for the promoting of his glory, wherein ſuch a wonderful meeting and uniting of things in themſelves moſt remote for that end may be truly diſcerned, that if prejudice do not ſhut mens eyes, they muſt confeſs this can be no blind chance but ſome higher counſel and conduct of the ſame; what would look more contingent than that *Ahaſuerus* was indiſpoſed to ſleep, and could have no reſt in the night, or that a reflection of the ſun upon the waters ſhould make them appear as blood to the children of *Moab?* But we ſee what great things the Lord is thus bringing about. 3. Is it not oft manifeſt how not the ſmalleſt caſuality or circumſtance providence doth loſe without ſome improvement thereof? Yea, that it guideth the ſtroke of a man's ſword in the battle, and directeth the bullet to its appointed mark, and doth evidently check the ſtars and control that fatal neceſſity, which we are ready to fear may or will follow their aſpect, and doth even determine theſe which in themſelves are moſt free and abſolute, the heart, and will of man; muſt not the crowing of the cock, the ſouldiers dividing Chriſt's garments fall out for an accompliſhment of the ſcripture, and though it was at a venture that that man drew the bow which ſent *Ahab* to his grave, yet, it was no chance did direct the arrow between the very joints of his armour. 4. Amidſt the various emergents and hazards of mens life, may not experience tell that ſurely things contingent are not abandoned to fortune, but there is a providence which doth number our hairs, without which they cannot fall to the ground. O how aſtoniſhing may it be to think how ſurprizing hazards have been oft obviated? By what unexpected means men have been delivered from violent aſſaults, how help unlooked for hath even come at a choke and an extremity, yea, while their foot was ſlipping even betwixt their falling and fall they have been met with ſome remarkable caſt of mercy. 5. Is it not eaſy to

diſcern, how many accidents which ſeem moſt caſual, yet by no human prudence or induſtry can be prevented, but are obſervably brought about, and guided to fulfill the threatnings of the word on ungodly men, how was *Siſera* led in to the houſe of *Jael*, as in other places, how ſhould *Haman*'s ſuit, for *Mordecai*'s death meet with that very morning, when the king's thoughts were favourable to him, for it might ſeem had *Haman* been one day ſooner he would have got his will.

(¶) This is a grave and ſerious ſubject, and in ſuch a day ſhould be much ſtudied, when ſo many are ready to quarrel at the way of the Lord, and out of every thing ſuck poiſon; when prejudices are now ſo univerſally abounding againſt the truth, that we may ſee what a witneſs there is even in the moſt dark and aſtoniſhing ſteps of providence to the truth and faithfulneſs of God; yea, how great a confirmation, we may thence have of our faith in ſuch ſhaking times, whilſt we ſee how theſe are ſpecial grounds againſt atheiſm, and a moſt convincing refutation of the ſame, which are ſo much made uſe of to ſtrengthen men in that way: I know the holy ſoveraignty of God ſhould teach us to adore and keep ſilence, when we cannot fathom the depths of providence, and on this great ſatisfying truth we ſhould ſtay and fix our ſelves, when things ſeem ſtrange to us: *He is the Lord and with him there is no unrighteouſneſs:* it is ſure the condition of the damned in hell takes not off that obligation to declare his faithfulneſs, and adore his unſpotted juſtice; but O then it would ceaſe to be hell if ſuch a bleſſed frame could have a being there; however it is a neceſſary and concerning duty when a matter ſeems too hard for us to underſtand to enquire in the ſanctuary; there is a warrantable ſearch after the works of God that we may know them: now beſides theſe inſtances which have been already mentioned, I would yet further touch ſome few ſteps of the providence of God, with a ſpecial reſpect to this preſent time, which may ſeem very ſtrange and be amazing; but when brought to that teſt of divine truth, will be found a moſt ſatisfying confirmation thereof.

I. It may ſeem ſtrange to ſee the church of Chriſt this day ſo univerſally brought low, and in a ſuffering condition, whilſt the whole earth beſides, is at ſuch reſt and quiet; that if we now look any where abroad, affliction and contempt from men is ſeen, in a very great meaſure, to attend the profeſſion of godlineſs, but more eſpecially the power thereof; yea, that almoſt in every place the church would ſeem to be upon a decay, and a declining rather than in an advance; I confeſs this may cauſe great thoughts of heart, when we conſider that ineſtimable value, he whoſe the church is hath put thereon, what glorious things are ſpoken of her in the word, eſpecially with a reſpect to the latter days, and we have judged (I humbly think with a ſafe warrand) that this ſhould be a ſolemn time of fulfilling theſe promiſes, which yet point at a more univerſal raiſing and enlargment of the church of Chriſt, yea, that in ſo great a meaſure we have ſeen ſome begun performance thereof, and therefore ſhould conclude the Lord's work herein cannot halt, until it be at the full height and at the perfect day; *ſhall I bring to the birth, and not cauſe to bring forth, ſaith the Lord; ſhall I cauſe to bring forth, and ſhut the womb, ſaith thy God, Iſa.* lxvi. 9. But let us go in to the ſcripture and there enquire concerning this, and we find. 1. How the church and the world in that intereſt of their joy and grief as well as other intereſts, are ſtated in a moſt direct oppoſition, *Joh.* xvi. 20. *Verily*, ſaith Chriſt, *Ye ſhall lament and weep, but the world ſhall rejoice.* It ſhould not be expected theſe can be at reſt together, ſince the trouble and ſuffering of the church, it is a part of the world's eaſe and quiet; what a ſolemn jubilee does that cauſe to her adverſaries, when they ſee before them the dead bodies

of the witneſſes of Chriſt. *Rev.* xi. 10. No ſight more rejoycing to ſuch, becauſe theſe are they who torment them who dwell in the earth; but when once the truth caſts off her ſackcloath, and the witneſſes get up to their feet; O what a terror doth this cauſe! they are pain'd, yea, their eyes ready to conſume in their eye-holes with bitterneſs and anguiſh, that they have been at ſo ſore work, and done ſo much againſt the church, and yet cannot undoe her. 2. Should this be more ſtrange now than at that time when the city of *Shuſan* and the whole ſeed of the *Jews* were in perplexity, whilſt the king and *Haman* ſat down to feaſt, and rejoyce over ſuch a threatned ruin; for this ſeemed to ſtrike at the root of the church univerſal; and was not that a broad and dark cloud when this was writ in the Lamentation of the church, *Zion is a wilderneſs, and* Jeruſalem *a deſolation; yea, could find no reſt, no comforter any where, Lam*, i. 16, 17. But if ſuch a providence ſeem ſtrange, that the church now at this day ſhould be with ſo violent a ſpate, and univerſal a ſtorm run down when ſo great things are promiſed, let us conſider his way who by the greateſt down-caſting and ſtraits uſeth to bring about the moſt remarkable mercies; and do we not know the Devil appears with greateſt wrath, and raiſeth the foreſt ſtorms, when he knows that his time is ſhort. 3. If we conſult the ſcripture, we will find the adverſaries of the church have an hour which is their hour and the power of darkneſs; for their ſun-ſhine is indeed a black and dark time; and then is there a ſtrange aſtoniſhing concurrence of outward advantages on their ſide; for they are thus eſtabliſhed for judgment, and the wind muſt ſerve, and the tide make until that that work in their hand be fulfilled, they could never have been ſuch a rod on the church, if they were not appointed of the Lord for the ſame; yea, is it not obſervable, whilſt this their hour continues, there is then a power of darkneſs; ſuch a time when that hath an unuſual force, and would ſeem to carry all before it, hath then a marvelous quick diſpatch in its ſpreading from one place to another, to make a dark night, where the goſpel ſometimes hath had a bright day, yet we ſee how ſuch a ſtrange darkneſs hath but its hour as to the prevalence thereof, even a ſet time for the church's trial: and it is ſuch an eclipſe, were it never ſo univerſal, that muſt go over at its appointed period, and give place to light, before which the darkneſs can no longer ſtand, and then it ſhall be ſaid to her, who had almoſt abandoned her ſelf to ſorrow; *Ariſe and ſhine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen.* 4. Why ſhould we be amazed at this, where we may read ſo clearly ſomething of the Lord's deſign, even by ſo ſore and univerſal a ſtroak to appear in his glory, *Pſal.* cii. 16. and thus raiſe his church with an unſpeakable advantage by ſuch a ſuppoſed ruin, the ſcripture is in this very manifeſt, that when the Lord is about ſome great building, and hath ſome excellent piece of work to raiſe up, a great deal of rubbiſh and breaking down uſeth to go before; is it not thus alſo he makes the ſuffering graces of his ſpirit in his people ſhine forth, that here the faith and patience of the ſaints may be witneſſed; yea, ſhould we not know there is in every age a filling up of the ſufferings of Chriſt in his people, and a teſtimony thus required to his truth, which the great witneſs himſelf did once ſeal and confirm with his blood, even he who before *Pontius Pilate* gave a good confeſſion, and through all ages even to the cloſe of time, there muſt not want ſome witneſſes to the ſame. It is known how ſome times of the church are beyond others made remarkable for ſuffering; but it is no leſs clear, that in theſe times alſo, the truth hath had the greateſt victory, and herein a more ſpecial clearing up of ſome truths which the world hath moſt ſtudied to darken; thus we ſee ſome ages of the church may have a larger part of this teſtimony aſſigned; yea, this remark may not

only be of ſome different lot and ſervice aſſigned to particular ages but to particular churches alſo. 5. If we enquire about this at the ſcripture, we will find alſo ſome remarkable proportion that the turning again of the church's captivity hath to her former bondage, read *Iſa.* xlix. 19, 20. and lv. 13. *Jer.* xxxi. 39. and you may ſee what an ample reſtauration is there, which as with a meaſuring line is made to anſwer in breadth and length to her former down-caſting; we find *Zion*'s rejoycing when her time of refreſhment comes from the preſence of the Lord, muſt reach all her mourners, and be as univerſal as once the cauſe of lamentation was, *Iſa.* lxvi. 10. Is it not ſuch an hour ſometime with the church that a refreſhing report is no where to be heard, but the tidings of the next day adds more grief to the former day's ſorrow; yet hath not ſuch a time quickly followed, wherein the church might ſay; *The Lord hath encreaſed her greatneſs, and comforted her on every ſide*; and hath had a ſpring and reviving upon the return of the ſun as univerſal, as her decay and withering once was through the dead winter, *Iſa.* li. 3. And truly, whilſt we conſider the time in which we are now fallen, how the church of Chriſt is every where low, and in a moſt languiſhing condition, antichriſtianiſm now upon a formidable growth, as if there were an univerſal conſpiracy to return again to *Babylon*, and if we will enquire into it at the ſcripture as we ſee this ſad decay we may thence conclude a certain delivery; yea, that even by a day of vengeance the Lord can bring about the year of his redeemed: I humbly think we may with a ſafe ſcripture warrand judge, that ſo univerſal a decay, ſuch a great overſpreading of darkneſs over the reformed churches through the whole world may give us ground to believe ſuch a breaking up alſo of the goſpel, and of the knowledge of the Lord, that ſhall be of as large extent, even to the filling of the earth therewith, as the waters cover the ſea; it will not be a particular ſhower and ſun-ſhine of refreſhing influences on ſome church, it will not be the reviving of the work of God in theſe nations, I muſt think, will anſwer ſo broad a cloud, and ſo univerſal a vaſtation and lamentation through the whole churches of Chriſt: but we may according to the ſcripture look on this as a part of the laſt and moſt remarkable aſſault that the church univerſal ſhall have from *Antichriſt*, before that full ſtroke on the ſeat of the beaſt; yea, that this is a very promiſing forerunner thereof, for when this party ſeems now to get up, and begins to move war, we have ſure ground to believe his further falling thereby, and that every new aſſault which that grand adverſary makes upon the church, ſhall ſo far put forward her intereſt and haſten his own ruin: Bleſſed are they who are helped in this dark hour to watch, and wait until the viſion break up, for it will aſſuredly ſpeak in the appointed time.

II. Theſe ſhort breathings of the church, now under the *New Teſtament*, may ſeem alſo ſtrange, that we ſee her ſun-ſhine ſo quickly darkned with clouds and followed with ſhowers, that any lucid interval ſhe enjoys wants not long a new ſtorm, we ſee this very clear what hath been the uſual lot of the church univerſal through all the times of the goſpel, how ſore toſſed and overclouded, her reſt of ſhort continuance, and as to particular churches, is it not a ſmall period of time which uſeth to be betwixt one aſſault and another? So that they draw their breath but a little for ſome new trial: I confeſs this would be puzling, if ſuch a piece of divine providence we ſhould eſſay to unriddle without the ſcripture; but we have the word near us, where we may ſee the fate and condition of the church under the goſpel, the moſt remarkable ſteps in her way, theſe ſharp aſſaults and ſhort breathings ſhe was to expect moſt clearly foretold and held forth; yea by conſulting this bleſſed record, we will find theſe. 1. That a more continued and fixed reſt

than

than that which may be ſeen hitherto in the church's condition could not well be reconciled with the ſcripture, there was indeed a great breathing, a moſt remarkable ceſſation under *Conſtantine*'s reign after a ſtorm of ſome ages continuance; but O how ſhort; and it is ſaid, *Rev.* viii. 1. *There was ſilence in heaven for half an hour*; I would here offer ſome remarks concerning the way of the Lord in this. 1. That the croſs and much affliction we find have a more peculiar reſpect to the diſpenſation of the goſpel than the times of the law; and this is ſpecially ſuited thereto, to go through many tribulations which is very conſentaneous to a greater manifeſtation of grace under the *New Teſtament*, that greater and more frequent trials for its exerciſe ſhould alſo be let forth. 2. We find ſuch ſore and uſual aſſaults are not only ſuited to the moſt excellent condition of the church in regard of ſpiritual privileges, but doth often exerciſe the moſt excellent of the ſaints, read, *Heb.* xi. 32. This remark uſeth not to fail, how every particular church, beſides theſe ordinary changes and toſſings in her lot, hath alſo ſome more ſolemn remarkable trials and ſome great aſſault, beyond others, and accordingly hath ſome more ſingular breathings and ſun-blinks ſuited thereto. 4. We cannot find any ſuch calm and breathing, which hath not been very ſhort, if we turn back and trace the hiſtory of the church in former times, but the clouds have returned quickly after the rain; yea, we may obſerve how the moſt excellent princes and magiſtrates, under whom the church hath had ſome ſweet repoſe, have been oft in a very ſhort time taken away, and have but lived a few years. 2. If we wonder at ſuch a piece of the Lord's way, why his church is thus toſſed, doth not the ſcripture ſhew what need ſhe hath to be emptied from veſſel to veſſel, a long calm being no leſs her hazard than a ſharp ſtorm, and more cauſe oft to watch over her outward reſt, than weep over her trouble and toſſings: Oh how oft hath the church loſt more by a few years peace than a long continued war; yea, the neceſſity of a ſharp winter for her recovery hath been ſo diſcernible ee'r it came, that if it were not for the oppreſſing of truth, and ſhaking of the faith of the ſaints, the continuance thereof might be almoſt wiſhed as her advantage, let be to be quietly ſubmitted unto. 3. Doth not the ſcripture alſo witneſs that continued laſting quarrel, which is betwixt the world and the church, and is perpetuate from generation to generation, that time cannot wear out, ſo that if ſhe had not ſo great a party for her, and an immediate ſupport from heaven, we might find more cauſe to wonder ſhe yet breaths, than to ask why her breathings are ſo ſhort when there is ſo great a power againſt her? O if the church had not this to anſwer all the meſſengers of the nations concerning her ſtability, *That the Lord hath founded Zion*, ſure that long breathing deſign for ſo many ages ſhould at laſt have taken place, even to the razing of her foundation. 4. It is clear the moſt ſingular fellowſhip, and free acceſs thereinto, with Jeſus Chriſt on the earth, is by the croſs, and in that way witneſſed, that it muſt be ſaid, if ſuch afflicting times did not oft return upon his people there would be a ſhut door betwixt the church, and a large part of the Bible, both as to its meaning, and as to its full breaſts of conſolation, are there not moſt ſweet refreſhing truths there, with which the godly cannot reach ſo near, feeling a converſe within an outward calm as under ſome ſharpeſt wreſtlings: O what an excellent commentary hath a ſuffering time given upon theſe, beyond all that ever was written, on ſuch a truth of the ſcripture, *perſecuted, but not forſaken, caſt down, but not deſtroyed, as ſorrowful, yet always rejoicing*, and thus, we ſee how in our ſtumbling at ſuch a providence *we err not knowing the ſcripture, and miſtake our own mercy.* 5. Whilſt we ſee theſe ſhort intervals which have ſo uſually been

been under the *New Teſtament*, betwixt one trial of the church and another, and the cauſe thereof ſo clear from the word; let us alſo conſider what warrant there is yet to expect before the end a more ſolemn and remarkable time of the church's enlargement, that not only ſhall be very univerſal in its extent; but a more laſting and continued reſt from the violence of the world than hath formerly been, which I humbly judge on clear ſcripture grounds we are to believe upon the coming of that full ſtroke on *Babylon*, and theſe ſolemn eſpouſals of the *jewiſh* church to Chriſt, which ſeems to be the moſt remarkable period of that time, appointed for the church's reign; and though this will not want ſome ſharp trials, and a mixture of outward trouble, yet, we find no ground from the ſcripture, after the diſcuſſing of *Antichriſt*, and the throwing down of the *Turkiſh Empire*, for any remarkable interruption and overclouding, or that the church ſhall have any great aſſault until that final gathering of the world and her forces together to the laſt battle of the Lamb.

III. Is not this a ſtrange remark likewiſe, which is ſo uſual a complaint through the church, that with a greater increaſe of light and knowledge, there is ſeen a viſible wearing out of life and power, and now in theſe more knowing times, there ſhould be ſo much ground to ſay, carefulneſs and the ſerious exerciſe of godlineſs is more worn out, and in a further decay, than in the times of greater ignorance: let us but look through the reformed churches at this day, and then turn home to our ſelves, and we will find this remark too ſadly verified; how after a great increaſe of knowledge, the truths of God in ſuch a meaſure cleared beyond former ages, it may be ſaid, Oh whither is the life and power of godlineſs gone, and that fervour which once ſo convincingly appeared in following the Lord? We know there is a ſweet agreement betwixt the chriſtian's light and life, which hath a mutual ſubſerviency to each other, and yet to ſee ſo ſad a jar this day, and ſo little proportion, the one hath to the other, may put us with aſtoniſhment to a ſerious inquiry thereanent; but the ſcripture is clear and makes it plain, if we will conſider. 1. That there is a time of a peoples eſpouſals to the Lord, and then the kindneſs of their youth, and a remarkable time of love is ſeen. *Jer.* xxi. 2. when their affection will be aloft after him; yea, ſuch a ſolemn period of the church's condition may be ſeen when it hath not reached that light and knowledge, as after; but do we not alſo find how rare it is for a people, to hold up at that rate and meaſure in their life and love, which at ſuch times hath appeared, whatever advance there may be as to light; thence we find the church's keeping up the name and profeſſion of godlineſs, *Rev.* iii. 2. when very ſore ſpent in her life; yea, this decay oft upon ſuch an unſenſible growth that it will be hard to get ſuch convinced thereof, and remember whence they are fallen. 2. If we will inquire at the ſcripture, it will alſo ſhew that judicial tendency which light not improved hath to a further hardning; how, under the goſpel men may be made deaf with hearing, for judgment am I come in the world, ſaith Chriſt, *Joh.* ix. 39. which hath that effect, that thoſe who ſee ſhould be made blind; light is ſurely one of the greateſt talents of the church, and brings with it either a remarkable gain, or loſs; nothing ſo dreadful as this when it is abuſed; O at what a rate doth it run down, and ſtupifie the conſcience! that thus men are not only more deadned, but become the more dead and blind that they were once enlightned. 3. May we not thence know how this is one of the Devil's greateſt engines he makes uſe of to turn men's light againſt their life and holineſs, even to incite them from that excellent diſcovery of the grace of God unto wantonneſs, *Judg.* iv. and thus eſſay an agreement betwixt light and darkneſs; O what a dreadful poiſon muſt that be! which can imbitter ſo excellent

a ſtream, and turn ſo choice and quickning a mean of ſpiritual life to be deſtructive thereto: that we ſee knowledge, whoſe true and native tendency is to humble and abaſe, being thus impoiſoned does work the contrary effect, even to ſwell men and puff them up; to oppoſe theſe gifts againſt the church which are given of the Lord for its edification, and for defence of the goſpel; thus we find it clear, when light hath made a further advance in the church, the Devil is there at work to deſtroy love, by many bitter contentious debates, where the intereſt may be oft ſeen more perſonal, to wit their repute and credit, than the intereſt of God and his truth: I am far from any intended reflection on that grave and neceſſary duty of appearing in defence of the truth, and mens ſtating themſelves in oppoſition to thoſe who are its adverſaries, a quarrel wherein they ſhould know neither friend nor brother; for this is to ſtand in the breach when it is aſſaulted, to contend for the faith; O bleſſed contention where ſuch with that excellent man *Melanchton* can ſay, *Non quæro gloriam propriam, ſed veritatem.* 4. Though this is a very ſad and threatning ſymptom that night is coming on a church where the light ſhines, but the heat and warming influence thereof is gone; yet here is a riddle, we find the ſcripture does wonderfully unfold, how the Lord makes things bring forth contrary effects, and cauſe a remarkable conſumption, that ſeems to reach the church in her inward and vital parts, reſolve in an overflowing with righteouſneſs, *Iſa.* x. 22. yea, thus lets us ſee a people ſo far ſpent in life and ſpirituality, that the things which remain are ready to dye, whilſt even there the Lord is purſuing their recovery: it is herein he makes his grace marvelous to raiſing his people in ſo low a ſtep of their condition, and cauſe his church when brought to a ſmall remnant take root downward, and bring forth fruit upward, *Iſa.* xxxvii. 31. It would ſeem a ſtrange connection, but not ſtrange to the grace of God, *Pſal.* cii. that the time of his favouring *Zion*, even that ſet time ſhould find her in a heap of ſtones and rubbiſh; yea, that a reviving and the breaking up of her day begins there with the weeping of her friends over her ruins: I ſhall further add, with reſpect to the preſent time, we may believe on very ſure grounds, that godlineſs and the power thereof, will yet break up in the world, though it were at the loweſt ebb, yea, as at its laſt breathing; that little fire now under aſhes muſt aſſuredly revive and blow up to a flame, yea, ſend forth its heat to warm the nations; for on ſolid grounds we may thus reaſon, if ſuch a death like decay had a reſpect only to ſome particular church, and if this withering abatement and languiſhing of the exerciſe of grace were confined but to a corner, it might be a ſad preſage that their ſun, when ſo far declined and gone down were near to the ſetting; but ſince this ſeems to be a conſumption over the whole earth, a matter of lamentation and a ſpreading complaint, through the whole reformed church, we may look on it as a very promiſing ground of confidence and hope of a recovery; for if that be ſure, the church univerſal cannot die under ſuch a diſeaſe, it is alſo ſure, this ſickneſs is not unto death, yea, ſo remarkable an oppoſition to the power of godlineſs as is this day through the world, we may judge a very refreſhing preſage of ſome more univerſal appearing of the ſame, wherein God will be ſeen by ſome bleſſed ſurprizal in a very immediate way; for there is hope of this tree, which in a ſpecial way he had himſelf planted, that it ſhall grow tho' now cut down, by the ſcent of waters, even by the rivers, the ſtreams whereof make glad the city of God; which can in old age cauſe her to bring forth fruit: O what life is there in the church of Chriſt, when it ſeems to be buried! for ſhe is in the root that cannot dry up, and herein muſt his promiſe and his people's praiſe meet, that her dry bones ſhall flouriſh as a green herb there; can be now no leſs appearance of this than at that time when the Lord turned again the captivity of his

people, which was ſo little expected, *Pſal.* cxxvi. that they knew not whether it was a dream or real: it may indeed be a very humbling diſcovery, that we muſt ſay, our ruin is of our ſelves; yet muſt it not ruin our hope, ſince in theſe great things which the Lord hath done for the church, the greatneſs of his power hath not been more clearly witneſſed, than the freedom and ſoveraignty of his grace, that men may ſee, *this is the Lord's doing, and ſhould be marvelous in their eyes.*

IV. May it not ſeem ſtrange, and be matter of aſtoniſhment, that the great men of the earth, and ſuch who ſit in the place of judgment are uſually found to be greateſt adverſaries to the church; yea, it is too well known, that magiſtracy (ſo excellent an ordinance of God) hath been ſo far perverted that even under the chriſtian magiſtrate the church of Chriſt hath ſuffered more ſince the firſt breaking up than from any other corner, this indeed may ſeem marvelous; I do not deny there have been great men in the world, who have no leſs out-ſhined others in fervour and zeal for the truth, than in their place and quality, but oh we may ſay, an age brings forth few ſuch, and that which *Salvian* ſays of his time, hath been a true remark in moſt ages of the world, and too frequently ſeen, that the contempt upon religion by thoſe who were in greateſt power had this effect, *Ut mali cogantur eſſe, ne viles habeantur:* I confeſs this may cauſe wonder, if we conſider for what end the great Law-giver hath deſigned that ordinance, how men ſhould ſo far counteract his intereſt, from whom they derive their power, and for being ſubſervient thereto have received it: ſure the doctrine of the church of Chriſt can give no ground of quarrel; and it's ſtrange theſe ſhould expect from others homage and ſubjection who turn the ſeat of judgment to be a grievous yoke, and deny their ſubjection ſo avowedly to the great judge: O how ſad is it that none are oft ſuch a terror to the godly, ſuch a ſupport to evil doers, as magiſtrates, and the great men of the world ſo uſually found to be the greateſt examples of wickedneſs; this ſhould indeed be matter of lamentation, yea, that theſe are oft times advanced, who have nothing to commend them but ſome advance beyond others in a higher meaſure of impiety: but we muſt go to the ſcripture and there enquire how it will appear. 1. That it is not ſtrange though iniquity have a throne, under whoſe ſhadow miſchief may not only ſhelter but come that length to be fram'd into a law, *Pſal.* xciv. 20. yea, it muſt not be thought ſtrange, that the adverſaries of the truth be among the chief of the time; which complaint we find, *Lam.* i. 5. The world is not yet cured of that madneſs of which the prophet ſpeaks with amazement, *Pſal.* ii. 1. why the kings and rulers of the earth ſhould attempt a vain thing to ruin the church, and make his decree void, who by his word created the world; we may ſee it is not only of late that the ſervants of Chriſt have been convened before rulers in defence of the truth, and have ſuffered by the law, where the crime was, their adherence to the expreſs command of the great law-giver, *Luk.* xxi. 12. it is alſo clear the kings of the earth for many ages paſt, have, amidſt all their private differences, with one conſent agreed to make war with the lamb, and give their ſtrength for upholding antichriſt, yet is this nothing elſe, but what the ſcripture hath foretold. *Rev.* xvii. It was written of an excellent man in the days of *Phocas*, that after ſome humble expoſtulating with the Lord, why he ſet up ſo vile a wretch in the higheſt place of power, that he had this return, *quia non inveni pejorem:* herein is the way of the Lord unſpotted, how ſad ſo ever it be in it ſelf, that thoſe who ſhould execute judgment for the oppreſſed, are in his holy diſpleaſure made the executioners of his judgments on men, and ſhew themſelves the greateſt oppreſſors. 2. If this be ſtrange to us, does not the ſcripture

prevent

prevent our ſtumbling by a moſt ſweet and choice antidote, that when we ſee the oppreſſion of the poor, and ſuch a wrathful aſpect rulers uſually have on the church of God, we ſhould not marvel or be much moved thereat, even when we ſee thoſe whom death hath pluck'd away, and with ſhame rolled in the grave, ſtill return with the ſame reſemblance in their ſucceſſors, and piety in all ages run down by power, for it is written, that he who is higher than the higheſt doth regard the ſame. *Eccleſ.* v. 8. O how far are they below God, yea, infinitely below him who are higheſt among men, hath not their violence and oppreſſion of the church him for a witneſs, whom they muſt alſo have for a judge? And the further they ſeem raiſed above human reach, they lie more near to ſome immediate ſtroke of a divine hand; that when there is no reprover on earth, none there to give their cruelty againſt the church a check, he ſits in heaven who laughs them to ſcorn, which they ſhall find to be ſad earneſt, when he ſpeaks to them in his wrath, and vexes them in his ſore diſpleaſure. 3. Does not the ſcripture witneſs the Lord's bleſſed deſign in this to make his church thrive another way, when ſhe is deſtitute of the help and countenance of civil authority, and thus lead her in to him, who hath the key of *David*, that opens and none can ſhut, unto him who is a known refuge for the oppreſſed; it is here he declares himſelf to be God, and the greatneſs of his power who can keep her alive, and preſerve his intereſt in a deſtroying flame, and under a cruel oppreſſing magiſtrate, yea, thus cauſe her flouriſh in his days, and have peace in his reign, even under the grievous reign of her adverſaries: do we not likewiſe find, *Neh.* ix. 36. The church's diſtreſs there, and oppreſſion from her rulers makes them reſolve in a near tie and conjunction with God, which is ſeen in the laſt verſe, *and becauſe of this we make a ſure covenant*, &c. O bleſſed violence and oppreſſion! that lands here, where the ſtorm drives to ſuch an anchor, as a further cleaving to the Lord, and ſurrender of themſelves to him. 4. As the ſcripture prevents mens ſtumbling at this ordinary ſuffering of the church under magiſtracy, it does alſo witneſs the Lord's contending very remarably againſt theſe on ſuch an account, and clearly ſheweth, that no human greatneſs can ſecure from him who cuts off the ſpirit of princes, and is terrible to the kings of the earth; conſider, *Pſal.* ii. 9. and xciii. 4. it is here we may read the cauſe of the changes of kingdoms and ſtates that are ſo frequent in the world, whatever influence perſonal intereſts ſeem to have, there is a holy revenging God, and his arm made bare therein upon the quarrel of his church, that he may recompenſe tribulation to thoſe who have troubled her; none needs wonder that flouriſhing ſtates are broken in ſuch a quarrel, to ſee the ſupreme head of the church, (that in all things he may have the preheminence) wound the head over many countries, and rule the nations with an iron rod, yea, turn great men out of their grandeur and authority, and throw them down, for the cauſe is obvious, they keep no bounds and marches with the kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt, but will be over and invade his intereſt, until he, who muſt reign, and have all dominion and power ſubjected to him, carry that war back upon themſelves, and ſtand up againſt ſuch evil neighbours, for his own right, for which he will ſtrike thorough kings in the day of his wrath, yea, purſue the race and ſeed of ſuch oppreſſors, the father and the children, as a ſtanding quarrel from generation to generation. 5. It is ſure, corrupt magiſtracy is one of the great plagues of God on the world; wherein his unſpotted righteouſneſs, and the provoking cauſe from men, may be ſeen in the ſcripture, that when ſuch will throw off his yoke, and quarrel with his authority in ſubjection to which their liberty lies, they ſhould have one more grievous and unſufferable wreathed on them, and be deliver'd

up

up to the hands of ſuch cruel exactors; I muſt here ſay the Lord does viſibly contend by ſuch a ſtroke with that exceſſive flattery and reſpect the nations give their rulers, that blind obedience they give contrary to the expreſs will of the Lawgiver, by a willing following of the commandment, and thus write that ſin on their judgment, that the hand of men ſhould be heavy and ſore on their own intereſts who can eaſily comply with their oppreſſion of the church, and invading the intereſts of God: but here is no intended reflection on that divine ordinance of magiſtracy, whereon his image is ſo viſibly impreſſed, though in all ages there hath been ſad cauſe to bewail the abuſe of ſo great a truſt and power, and to ſee it ſo deſtructive to the end for which it is deſigned.

V. This alſo ſeems ſtrange, and is a very ſhaking thing, to ſee ſome of greateſt repute and eminency in the church, who have been ſingularly uſeful to engage others in the way of the Lord, change their principles with the time, and turn at laſt in oppoſition thereto, yea, make it their work to caſt down what once with great zeal they ſeemed to build; I confeſs this may give ſad ground of ſtumbling, and there is nothing that atheiſm takes more advantage of to queſtion the truth of all religion, if there be any thing further, than a human intereſt in it, when mens light in the matters of God, and the doctrine of miniſters are found ſo croſs to themſelves with the changes of the time: bleſſed are they who are not offended at Chriſt becauſe of this; but let us conſult the ſcripture, and then inſtead of being ſhaken or brangled, we will find this ſuch a ſpecial confirmation of the truth, that if it were not thus, men might rather queſtion the ſame; for, 1. Such a ſhaking trial is clearly foretold from croſs tides of doctrine, that ſhould be within the church, *Eph.* iv. 14. yea, a warning given of thoſe who handle the word deceitfully, 2 *Cor.* iv. 2. by accommodating it to their private intereſt and deſign, and a corrupt application thereof; for when men do once eſtabliſh the concluſion before the premiſes for compliance with a ſinful courſe, they are then at work to wreſt the ſcripture by miſapplying it, 2 *Pet.* iii. which is indeed to oppoſe the truth againſt it ſelf, and ſute it to their byaſs; that they may ſalve ſuch a viſible oppoſition betwixt them and themſelves in their way and practice; and thus whatever fair ſhew they make in the fleſh, they expoſe the word and their parts and abilities in handling of it to ſale (O an accurſed ſale and merchandize) now if this ſeem ſtrange and be ſtumbling, that amongſt the diſpenſers of the myſteries of God, and of greateſt repute in the church, ſuch ſhould be found, read, 2 *Cor.* ii. 17. and you will there ſee the cauſe why many corrupt the word, becauſe they are not in ſincerity and as in the ſight of God therein, which is abſolutely required to qualify a faithful miniſter of Chriſt: Oh! the want of that candor and uprightneſs of heart is a worm which lies hid at the root of all their other parts, and as a dead corrupting fly in ſo excellent a box of ointment; thus we may ſee this is ſo far from being a cauſe of ſtumbling at the truth, that it does moſt convincingly fulfil and verify the ſame. 2. When we have ſo ſad a diſcovery in the church, have we not this antidote likewiſe from the ſcripture, not to be ſhaken or moved thereat, *Heb.* xiii. 9. but that we ſtudy to know and be perſuaded of the truth that may quiet and ſupport the ſoul, though we ſhould be left alone in following duty, the teſtimony of God is ſure and immoveable, and he is true, though all men ſhould be liars, we muſt have the perſons of none in admiration, which hath ſo uſual a tendency to bribe the judgment and betray the truth; but though an apoſtle or an angel from heaven ſhould come to oppoſe the ſcripture of God, we ought in ſo far ſay, *let him be accurſed.* 3. Here alſo is the holy counſel and deſign of the Lord

made known that these who are approved may be made manifest, and such have an opportunity to discover themselves, who turn aside to crooked paths, and tread in the dark to the prejudice of the truth, *Psal.* cxxv. 5. they may dig very deep to hide their opposition to God, not only from others; but even from themselves; but providence herein hath a deeper reach, and ensnares them in the work of their own hands; yea, doth thus bring forth with the workers of iniquity, and as his greatest adversaries, who wound and betray his interest under that mask and disguise of a friend; this is indeed a preventing mercy to the church, whose hurt and hazard hath been more from these who walk under a cover than any other party; and here is the counsel of the Lord shewed, that when a piercing trial comes which will go thorough the soul like a sword, the thoughts of many hearts may be then discovered, there is a falling in of many with the church under a calm, who must fall off with a storm, it is strange to think how small the first entry of a further declining will be when once there is a tendency and byas that way, how hard is it to joyn in a familiar correspondence with the adversaries of the truth without joyning in some measure with their way; yea, it is seen these usually are more ensnared than the adverse party by any such tampering are bettered; it is a sad truth which is said of *Ephraim, strangers devoured his strength, yet he knew it not, Hos.* vii. 8. it is no wonder when men come the length of detaining the truth in unrighteousness, and withstand the giving of a testimony thereto when called, that the next step be, some appearance against it. 4. Is it not clear from the scripture that the righteous God doth thus rain snares on men? Yea, this is one of the woes the world is under because of offences; for the fall and turning aside of such is a sad stroke on others, whilst they use not to fall alone, when these become a stumbling block, whose lips should preserve knowledge, whom the people are to consult concerning the law, and thus be the greatest cause of offence themselves whose work is to strengthen and confirm others; O what a sore plague is this on a poor church, when it is low, to break her further, and make her distemper grow; we may truly say it is more threatning than sword, famine or pestilence against a nation; it is a strange ground which is given of the departure of these from the faith who were once in repute of the church, yea, of the breaking up of antichrist in the world, 2 *Thes.* ii. 12. that it was to punish them who believed not the truth, and would not embrace the same; O it is a sad and dreadful time to live in, where such offences abound! for it clearly shews a judicially plaguing time upon the church, and some great abuse of the gospel which is gone before.

VI. When this seems strange to us, should we not learn to adore and justify him, who thus stains the pride of all flesh, and will silence the confidence or boasting of instruments, that the church may know where her strength lies; this is a remark though sad which seldom fails, that the greatest endowments and gifts, where men are swelled and lift up therewith have a more easy and native byas against the truth than for it, and threatens the church's hazard more than any advantage the exercise of these gifts can promise; and the greater repute men walk under, where humility keeps not low, lays them the more near some humbling stroke to bring them low, e'er they go off the stage, that no flesh may glory in his presence, 1 *Cor.* i. 26. we must say the greatest *heroes* in the church of Christ, who have shined, even to their last, most brightly, have been also the most humble. 6. As it is clear there is no jar betwixt the scripture and this, but it is so great a confirmation thereof, that should further strengthen and establish us in the way of the Lord, for the falling off of such from the truth is a trial most expresly foretold, and a convincing witness to the truth of the scripture; so this also must be granted

ed that there are miniſters and watchmen in the church of Chriſt, in all ages found faithful to their maſter's intereſt, who have been not only helped to confeſs the truth, and deliver the counſel of God to the world, but to witneſs their adherence to and perſuaſion of it by ſuffering: O can the world debate this that ſuch in the worſt of times are found to drive a treaty of reconciliation betwixt Chriſt and ſinners, who are in earneſt, and have a weight of that work on them without reſpect to outward encouragement; O happy ſervants of ſo great a maſter, who conſider that they ſhine without borrowed light, and derive all from him whether as to grace or gifts, that therein they may return to him again, by a faithful improvement of their talent, who reckons they cannot be low where he is exalted, they cannot loſe where the gain is his, but in this doth rejoice to ſee him increaſe and his kingdom on an advance, though they decreaſe and be darkned with the brightneſs of his riſing.

VII. I know this is an aſtoniſhing thing, which many pretend a cauſe for ſtumbling, to ſee how ſome have walked, and at what a rate under a profeſſion of godlineſs, and for ſo long a time have had the appearance of being ſerious and exact, yea, have thus perſonated the walk of a chriſtian, whom an after diſcovery had proved not in ſome particular only, but in the main intereſt of religion to be without reality and truth; this may indeed ſeem ſtrange and be cauſe of wonder that men having the uſe of reaſon ſhould be at ſo ſore a toil, to hold up a form of godlineſs and the external exerciſe of chriſtian duties only for a form, who might with an other kind of facilitie and unſpeakable pleaſure have reached both the ſhadow and the ſubſtance by being ſerious, and it is ſure, if ſuch get not the impreſſion of a deity razed out of the ſoul (which is impoſſible) there muſt be ſome time terror in their approach to God, though not in any ſecret retirements, (for this ſhould be a piece of their torment to come ſo near their conſcience, and be alone with it, leſt it flee in their face) yet with others, when ſuch a witneſs they have within, that it is their deliberate work to deceive at once, the great God, their generation, and their own ſoul, but oh this is not more ſtrange than true, yea, many ſuch pretenders are, and will be within the pale of the viſible church, and is there not a divine hand marvelouſly oft ſeen in renting that vail and bringing theſe forth to the light, in ſuch a way as may witneſs this is from the Lord; now there is no ground of accuſation or reflection here on his holy and unſpotted way or the reality of godlineſs, if we will but ſeriouſly enquire at the ſcripture where we have this. 1. Expreſly foretold, that men ſhould have a form of godlineſs and deny the power thereof. 1 *Tim.* iii. 5. profeſs to know God, being abominable diſobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. *Tit.* i. 16. yea, will come in ſheeps clothing yet be ravenous wolves, have not ſome of the church's ſharpeſt trials been in ſuch a way uſhered in, even under a falſe ſhew, and have not the moſt cruel perſecutors entered the ſtage as friends? You know how the man of ſin did firſt ſtep in, was he not thus masked? And is not the ſcripture clear, that to ſeek a church free of ſuch a mixture out of heaven, is to ſeek that which we will never find, for it is there only, *no unclean thing can enter.* 2. Does not this bleſſed record of the ſcripture ſhew with what ſingular art and advantage ſuch may act that part and with *Jehu* enquire, if the man's heart be right whilſt his own is moſt falſe, what a ſtrange confidence will theſe have who glory in appearance and not in heart? Will they not cry unto God and make mention of him but not in truth, *Iſa.* xlviii. yea, ſhould we wonder, though ſuch be found who can mask their private intereſt with ſuch an appearance, even whilſt they ſeek a rule for their religion out of *Matchiavel*, but not out of the *Bible.* 3. If the length that theſe may come ſeem

ſtrange,

ſtrange, will you conſult the ſcripture which goes as great a length in its diſcovery, and you will know how deep it works, ſometimes not at an ordinary rate, but they will invite the world to ſee their zeal for God, who dare not endure the view of their own conſcience, therein you may find an apoſtle and one of the twelve and yet a Devil, to witneſs this ſhould be no reflection on the church of Chriſt, though an eminent miniſter thereof be found rotten and unſound who hath made a great ſhew in the fleſh. 4. Does the ſcripture allow, or flatter any in ſuch a way? You cannot there have one line for its encouragement; but whilſt human law does not reach this, divine law moſt ſeverely threatens, *Job* viii. 13 *&c. Matth.* vii. 15. *&c.* And there you may ſee it in its own colour, how horrid a thing it is which the more near it does approach religion, (that is ſo excellent and lovely in it ſelf) this falſe ſhew thereof is the more hateful and loathſome; yea, even theſe who comply with it in themſelves are made to loath it in others, which is in the higheſt meaſure a falſhood and lie, becauſe a lying to the God of truth. 5. You cannot accuſe the church and followers of Jeſus Chriſt, that by them any ſuch thing is owned or juſtify'd, but it may be ſeen, what an offence and wound ſuch a diſcovery will prove to theſe; it is indeed a cauſe of grief, but no cauſe of reflection on the truth of God, for in ſo far this is verified, they went out from us, becauſe they were not of us, 1 *Joh.* ii. 29. 6. Is not that horrid and black roll mention'd by the apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* ii. 3. claſpt as it were betwixt theſe two, a form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof: it is not ſtrange when religion is attended with much power in a place, that hypocriſy is found there alſo; but it is clear what remarkable diſcoveries have been made thereof, that ſeldom ſuch who have moſt induſtriouſly ſtudied that accurſed art have gone to the grave under this cover, though I deny not but ſome may. I muſt further add, that ſome ſpecial incitement and concurrence of the Devil is here oft very manifeſt, and his power as remarkably put forth as in any luſt of the fleſh to put ſome foreward on ſuch a deſign; yea, even may be ſubſervient to them in the exerciſe of common gifts, that may deceive for the time very diſcerning chriſtians; I cannot queſtion the truth of this, having ground to inſtance ſuch, who have been in an expreſs covenant with Satan, and have after acknowledged his help and aſſiſtance, for their dexterous managing ſo dreadful a deſign; if you think this ſtrange, you ſhould conſider that the Devil himſelf is transform'd to an angel of light, but it is well, the groſſeſt defilement of men can no ways ſtain religion and the way of the Lord, which is pure and undefiled.

VIII. Theſe ſad jarrs and diviſions which are ſo frequent in the church of Chriſt may ſeem very ſtrange, and be cauſe of ſtumbling and offence to many, that whilſt the world is at ſuch an agreemeent, and of one mind to oppoſe the truth, theſe are oft found at war, moſt bitterly contending amongſt themſelves, even theſe who ſhould ſtand in the breach for the truth, and in defence of the goſpel, the fellow ſervants at ſtrife, and ſmiting one another when they ſhould be ſtriving together about their maſter's work; I confeſs this is ſad, and is a rock whereon many ſplit, of which they have made that uſe to a further heightning of their prejudice againſt the truth; yea, it is ſtrange that this deſtroying plague doth ſo obſervably attend any peace or calm: that the church hath, in her outward condition; but there is no cauſe for ſuch ſtumbling if we will allow it ſome ſerious thoughts, it may rather help to fix and eſtabliſh us in the way of the Lord, and inſtead of being a poiſon, may be an effectual antidote againſt the ſame, I mean the atheiſm of the time which pretends ſo great an advantage from this, for the ſcripture is clear. 1. Though it is a ſore ſtroke on the church, and the moſt ſad departure of God from a

people which we have upon divine record, we find uſually overtakes them in ſuch a torn and divided caſe, yea, though in all the records of after-times, this may be traced in the breaking up of a judgment as a very immediate forerunner thereof, yet have we no warrant to expect the church militant ſhall be in that condition, in which there ſhall be no ſuch diſcord and breach, no, that is heaven, and it is there only perfect peace and concord will be found; read, 1 *Cor.* i. 10. *Rom.* xv. 5. and what an early trial was this to the church which did occaſion that grave and ſolemn meeting of the apoſtles and elders, *Act.* xv. to let us ſee, how the Lord can ſerve himſelf of the greateſt evil for the advantage of his truth. 2. There is no cauſe here of reflecting on the truth, whatever be on thoſe who profeſs it, ſince the ſcripture ſhews we know but in part, and propheſy in part, and ſuch a prevailing mixture of corruption, that ſome will preach Chriſt out of ſtrife and contention, not ſincerely, *Phil.* i. 15. Yea, whilſt there are ſuch different ſizes amongſt the ſaints, that theſe who eat *not*, *are ready to judge them who eat*, and theſe who *eat*, are ready to deſpiſe him who eateth not. 3. If we conſult the ſcripture, we will find that peace and concord within the church, which is ſo excellent in it ſelf, and deſirable muſt be ſeverely qualified with a reſpect to holineſs. *Hebr.* xii. 14. foreſe ſuch an agreement would not be the true peace of the church, but her plague; and is not that wiſdom which is from above firſt pure and then peaceable? It is ſure, they are its beſt friends who have leaſt latitude to take or give in the intereſt of truth; but it is oft found, how ſuch in direct tamperings for peace, have in the judgment of the Lord cauſed a further breach; there is no true jar betwixt the zeal of God, and an ardent deſire and endeavour for peace, but what our corruption cauſeth; O this is a bleſſed peace-maker, who can go the furtheſt length to yield in his own things, whether credit or private intereſt, yea, overlook the moſt ſharp perſonal reflections to promote that excellent deſign; but hath nothing to yield or quit upon his maſter's intereſts, and can reſiſt whoſoever they be that would prejudge this, even to their face; have we not that heroick practice of the apoſtle, *Gal.* ii. 5. upon divine record to this day, *to whom we gave place, no not for an hour, that the truth of the goſpel might continue with you*: Is not that alſo a ſpecial remark, that theſe who cauſe diviſion in the church, and were therefore to be noted, *Rom.* xvi. 17. it was theſe, who did oppoſe the doctrine of the church, for it is mens falling off from the truth, which is indeed the cauſe of a ſchiſm and rent, but not their adherence to it, though for this they ſhould be men of contention, and look'd on as ſigns and wonders in the time. 4. Whatever advantage ſome may take to accuſe the way of the Lord, from theſe breaches, I am ſure they cannot deny, there is a fellowſhip and concord in the church of Chriſt beyond any in the world, there is a communion of the ſaints, even here, with one heart and mind, yea, in ſuch a meaſure as may ſhew the world, this is a bond that exceeds the moſt near and ſtrait ties of natural relations. *Eph.* iv. 3. 16. and truly every jar and difference amongſt the followers of Chriſt, makes not a breach.

IX. I know that this will ſeem ſtrange and aſtoniſhing in the way of the Lord, that when the church from her adverſaries without, is oppreſſed and brought low, his hand in a very immediate way alſo is ſo heavy, yea, ſeems more ſore upon his people, than the hand of men, and do's even by ſome ſad ſtrokes in their private intereſts, and upon their perſons appear more remarkably againſt them, than againſt any others; this may occaſion great thoughts of heart. When we conſider that tenderneſs which the Lord doth witneſs towards his people, that he ſtirs not up all his wrath, nor will lay upon them above that they can bear, but ſtays his rough wind in the day of

the eaſt wind, and hath promiſed to be a ſanctuary, and hiding place when they are ſcattered by men: *Ezek.* xi. 16. and with another party the church might debate, yea, hold her own, with her greateſt adverſaries; but oh! it is time to flee and there can be no ſtanding, where the Almighty purſues, there is then true cauſe of fear and terror when he becomes his people's party; but let us conſult the ſcripture that great interpreter of providence, and of every ſtep of the way and procedure of the Lord with his church; and it will let us ſee. 1. That it is no ſtrange caſe, or untroden path, but we may find the prophet, *Jer.* xvii. 17. at ſuch a grievous cry, *be not a terror to me, thou art my hope in the evil day*, and had not the church the ſame cauſe of complaint, *Jer.* xxx. 14. 16. *that the Lord ſeem'd to wound her with the wound of an enemy and the ſtroke of a cruel one*; it was the appearance of this, that was a very ſad addition to her trial beyond any other thing, *Iſa.* lxiii. 10 that they found the Lord turn'd to be their enemy, and in an immediate way ſeem to fight againſt them. 2. Do's not the ſcripture ſhew that the rod may have a dreadful appearance, and the way of the Lord, by ſome ſtrange and ſingular circumſtances in dealing with his people, may be matter of amazement, when he deſigns a further increaſe of their grace, yea, their trial more than their puniſhment; this is indeed one of the deeps of providence, which we have diſcovered, *Job* firſt and ſecond *Chapters*, how by a divine permiſſion, Satan may very effectually concur in a ſtroke on the church, or ſome particular chriſtian, and thus cauſe a ſtrange concurrence of imbittering things, that in ſuch a caſe the hand of the Lord would ſeem very terrible, whilſt he only minds his peoples trial, and it is clear that the fiery trial mentioned by the apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* iv. 12. may have ſuch ſtrange and ſingular circumſtances, that the godly will be at a queſtion if ſuch did ever befal others, and yet you ſee it there held forth more as a ground of joy than of fear; O how deep in afflicting times of the church may the plot and contrivance of the Devil be! which in the holy counſel of the Lord is oft forced to run againſt its own byaſs, and to bring forth the very contrary effect. 3. If we underſtand the ſcripture, we may there know, how the trials of the church hath its appointed bounds and meaſure, yea, by ſome remarkable ſteps will grow that length, and have ſuch an advance until it ſurround them on all hands. *Lam.* ii. 22. *Thou haſt called my terrors round about, as in a ſolemn day*; yet, when it is ſo, we find it is not without cauſe, but may be needful for the church and particular chriſtians to be in heavineſs through manifold temptations, 1 *Pet.* i. 6. and truly in ſuch an unuſual variety of ſtraits, the tendency thereof is oft ſeen for as manifold uſe and advantage, as the many afflicting ingredients in that trial have been remarkable. 4. We may alſo ſee from the ſcripture, what an uſual reſemblance there is betwixt the publick lot of the church in ſuffering times, and the private caſe of the ſaints, how under ſome ſad trial and departure of the Lord from his people, his diſpenſations are many ways corrective and judicial, that doth then reach them in all their perſonal intereſts; there is a backſliding time, and a day, when judgment particularly points at the green tree, which uſeth not to be a comforting time, that then *Satan* is more obſervably let looſe to afflict, and few will miſs ſome touch of his hand, read *Lam.* i. 2. where you find *the ſword abroad devouring*, a time of publick judgment, and then it was *at home alſo as death*, and in the 16. under ſuch ſore afflicting ſtrokes there is one further held forth, that was moſt imbittering of all to the godly in that time, *the comforter who ſhould relieve their ſoul was far off*; it is clear, nothing does more endear a mercy and make it ſweet than the Lord's immediate appearance therein;

therein; and nothing does more imbitter the rod, which put *David* to that cry, *Pſal.* xxxix. *remove that ſtroke from me, I am conſumed by the blow of thine hand.* 5. Upon a ſerious inquiry concerning this ſtrange thing, may we not underſtand the meaning thereof by the ſcripture, why in ſome trials the Lord does thus ſhew himſelf his peoples party, and his hand more heavy on them than on others, that there is ſome provoking cauſe whereat theſe providences clearly point; when the godly are purſuing their eaſe and ſatisfaction under the rod, more than to anſwer its deſign, when they are ready to take mortification and an humble ſtooping under trouble, for a couching underneath their burden, it is not then ſtrange, though that ſad woe, *Amos* vi. 6. does ſo far reach them as their perſonal caſe makes them forget the affliction of *Joſeph*: for thus the righteous God ſuits their ſtroke to the ſin, and keeps ſuch a proportion, that a light burden of the care of the church ſhould make their care otherways abound, and in their own things preſs them with much trouble, when theſe go betwixt them and the intereſt of Chriſt, there is a very unſeen cauſe oft why many of the ſaints may be ſick, and ſome falling aſleep, yea, this truth muſt be likewiſe verify'd, there is a ſaving of things by which we put them in further hazard, and a ſecuring thereof by a ſurrender to the Lord, an immoderate fear of a ſtroke from men to the prejudice of preſent and neceſſary duty, may bring with it ſome ſad immediate ſtrokes in the diſpleaſure of the Lord from his hand; yea, that he ſhould thus bereave his church of many choiceſt inſtruments by his very immediate hand, to make it appear the anger and jealouſie of the moſt high God, is more to be dreaded, than the wrath and violence of all our adverſaries: but yet in the cloſe of theſe judgments, even when a church may ſeem quite conſumed, and her ſtrength worn out, have we not there ſome ground of hope that the Lord may prevent his peoples thoughts by as marvelous, as immediate reſtoring providences, when he ſees their power is gone, and that there is none to help; yea, is it not eaſy with him and like his way, to return and reſtore what the former years have taken away, by the locuſt and caterpiller, *&c.* which he had ſent amongſt them. *Joel* ii. 25.

X. There is a ſtep of the holy providence of God and his unſpotted judgment, which would alſo ſeem ſtrange and amazing, that which is inflicted upon the ſoul and conſcience by an immediate ſtroke of judical induration, and is very evident; Oh how undeniably evident, and clear at this day! that men under great light, ſome ſpecial diſcoveries of God, after known convictions and wreſtlings of conſcience, yea, after ſolemn engagements and their declared reſolution to follow the Lord in his way, have yet come ſuch a length and degree in a deliberate reſiſting and oppoſing themſelves to him and his truth, without the leaſt appearance of a check or trouble: I confeſs this is one of the marvelous things of God, and a very viſible demonſtration of his being, who hath ſuch a dominion over the ſoul, both in its hardning and ſoftning; but no cauſe to ſtumble hereat, it does truly call us to fear, and is a ſtroke that may force on atheiſts the awful conviction of a Deity; or though it is not felt by theſe who are under the ſame, becauſe the want of ſenſe and feeling is a part of that diſeaſe, yet all who look on (if they did not ſhut their own eyes) may learn to know this is the very work of God, and a piece of his judgment which he makes known in the earth; but let us ſearch the ſcripture, and we ſhall find inſtead of any ground for ſtumbling, what a ſpecial confirmation this ſhould be of the truth, ſince it is clear. 1. How in this the way of the Lord is holy and righteous, who is under no debt, no obligation to the ſons of men. *Rom.* ix. 18. but is abſolutely free to let forth grace to, or with hold from whom he pleaſeth; his bleſſed will being the

alone

alone rule of righteouſneſs, he comprehends the reaſon of all his counſel and judgments which are to us incomprehenſible, yet does he ſo far condeſcend to let men ſee his unſpotted juſtice as well as his ſoveraignty in this ſhines forth, that they who are unjuſt by a deliberate choice ſhould be unjuſt ſtill by a further arreſt, *Rev.* xxii. and theſe who will not hearken, and will have none of him, ſhould be deliver'd up to the luſts of their own heart, *Pſal.* lxxxi. 11. we ſee in what a meaſure *Pharaoh* was hardned of the Lord, which was a plague worſe than the other ten: but we find *Exod.* vi. 34. that *Pharaoh* hardned his own heart, and thus was a ſtroke ſuited to ſuch a reſolute reſiſting of light. 2. Does not the ſcripture ſhew the marvelous convoy of this judgment, *Iſa.* vi. 6. how this ſad ſentence is immediately paſſed on the ſoul; yea, by theſe moſt ſingular means, the word and ordinances for enlivening, is executed thereon, men preached deaf and dead, where others find life; this is a ſtroke that does not draw a bar betwixt them and external fellowſhip with the ordinances; but O it draws an inviſible bar betwixt them and the power and efficacy thereof; it is a judgment that walks in the dark, and binds where none can looſe, it killeth without a cry; yea, gives men a death ſtroke, when the pain of that wound is not felt. 3. Do you not ſee how this ſtrange judgment is in as great an height and meaſure held forth by the ſcripture, as you ſee it in any example before your eyes, that men will be mad in their oppoſition to God, even when he is moſt remarkably oppoſing them, ſuch as *Ahaz*, who did treſpaſs the more, the more he was diſtreſſed, 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 22. Yea, ſuch who with thoſe men of *Sodom* would grope after the door, and perſiſt in that wickedneſs when God hath immediately ſmitten them with blindneſs for the ſame: O what may be the next ſtroke, where men renew their aſſault againſt God after he hath once and again ſmitten them, who inſtead of repenting under his ſore plagues, turn enraged to blaſpheme him, who hath power over the ſame: is not that a ſtrange degree of judicial induration. *Act.* vii. 57. that when they ſaw the face of *Stephen* ſhine, and looked ſtedfaſtly thereon, they did then run with fury againſt him; yea, it may be ſeen in all ages that ſuch a length this judgment will come to look on the moſt convincing extraordinary judgments of God on others, and yet not be moved therewith themſelves, that when his hand is lifted up they will not ſee, but the poſterity take up the ſame quarrel and purſue it, wherein they have ſeen their fathers fall under the ſtroke of an avenging God. 4. We may alſo know from the ſcripture how deep this judgment may draw in its dreadful effects, what a judicial arreſt is thus ſerved on men by which they are bound over to deſtruction, and their bands made ſtrong on them, as that they can neither ſtir nor move, but as malefactors ſhut up in jail, and under fetters; which is not more evident before the execution than this arreſt on their ſoul is by obduration before ſome further ſtroke, thus they lie near ſudden deſtruction and a blow that is irrecoverable, who have harden'd themſelves under frequent reproofs. *Prov.* xxvi. It is known what *Pharaoh*'s laſt rebuke was after he had rejected many, it ſtands upon publick record to after ages; I ſhall add, is there not ſomething of hell here? and of theſe everlaſting fetters in ſome meaſure made viſible in the earth; for where light and conviction does reſolve in rage and malice againſt the truth, nothing can be more like hell, or have a more near reſemblance to the Devil.

XI. I ſhall add one inſtance more which may ſeem alſo a ſtrange and marvelous part of the providence of God, that the righteous ſhould fall, and have one event with the wicked in a time of judgment, whilſt we ſee ſome noted for wickedneſs, and their horrid actings in oppoſition to the church go to the grave in peace, as to any remarkable ſtroke from the Lord upon them, I know

know men are ready to wonder hereat; yea, thence an atheiſt will infer things muſt fall out at an adventure; but O if theſe would bring this to the ſcripture and ſet it foreagainſt the ſame! they ſhould there ſee how convincingly it is verified, and that there is nothing here which does not clearly agree with that bleſſed record; for it ſhews. 1. That by no external providences or any thing diſpenſed within time, yea, by no affliction obvious to ſenſe, the way of the Lord, and his reſpects to his people can be judged, even amidſt the greateſt variety of events, which here fall out; But we are in this obliged to adore God, whoſe judgments are incomprehenſible, we ſee at the ſame time, *a juſt man periſh in his righteouſneſs, and a wicked man prolong his life in wickedneſs. Eccleſ.* vii. 25. 2. The ſcripture gives us this return alſo, concerning ſuch a providence, why the ſword devours both, and as *Saul* and *Jonathan* fall together, that there, the Lord does in a ſpecial way difference betwixt one and another, *Joſias* died in peace, as was promiſed, 2 *Kings* xxii. 20. yet he fell upon the high places of the field in the common judgment; but he was then taken from the evil to come, yea, thus was delivered, even by a ſtroke of the hot diſpleaſure of God on others; It is not ſtrange, that ſome may be hid in the grave from a further ſtorm, by the ſame judgment, wherein the Lord is purſuing the land in which they have their abode. 3. It is clear from the ſcripture, how ſmall an acceſſion to a ſinful courſe, may in the holy diſpleaſure of God bring ſome of his people under the ſame ſtroke with his adverſaries, and ſo far involve them in that judgment; we find *Pſal.* i. 1. there is a ſtanding in the way, and joining in the counſel of the ungodly, held forth as a partaking with them in their ſin; and *Ezek.* ix. tells us, that not mourning for, and witneſſing a diſſent againſt the national ſins of the time, puts men far out of that bleſſed roll of thoſe whom the Lord does difference from others, by a mark of his preſervation. Now as to that other, how it is the wicked prolong their days in wickedneſs, and may go in ſome external peace to the grave, do but enquire at the ſcripture, and it will ſhew. 1. It was no leſs ſtrange to the prophet *Jeremiah* xii. *Yea they proſper, and took root*, did it not amaze that bleſſed man, *Pſal.* lxxiii. that not only *their eyes ſtand out with fatneſs, but they have no bands in their death.* But 2. Is not the way of the Lord in this manifeſt, how graciouſly he prevents ſome by a ſad temporal ſtroke, and can ſerve himſelf of a ſcaffold or gibbet to bring about their mercy, as he did to the thief on the croſs, whilſt he plagues others by a long forbearance, and his holding off ſuch ſtrokes, *Eccleſ.* viii. 11. the dreadful effects whereof are held forth, becauſe ſentence is not ſpeedily executed againſt wicked men, their heart is therefore ſet on miſchief. 3. As in every age we are called to adore the ſoveraignty of God in ſuch a thing, he gives men alſo cauſe to obſerve his great judgments, ſome remarkable ſtrokes on his adverſaries, which they cannot paſs without ſuch a remark. *Behold a man that made not God his ſtrength, Pſal.* lii. 7. but we muſt further wait for that full diſcrimination, which the laſt ſentence of the judge ſhall put betwixt *thoſe who fear the Lord, and thoſe who fear him not.* (¶)

The THIRD ARGUMENT.

FOR the ſcriptures accompliſhment is this; *that which not only the chriſtians experience, and obſervation of the church beareth witneſs thereto,* but is alſo *a truth which even to the view, and conviction of the world, may be demonſtrate,* from whom it doth oft force a teſtimony, yea, in every age the worſt of men have been forced to acknowledge, it

muſt be a thing very evident. But the accompliſhment of the ſcripture can be thus witneſſed, therefore; *&c.*

It is true, thoſe ſweet and ſenſible enjoyments, which the ſaints have of this truth, the world cannot reach; but it is alſo ſure, that in every age, the works of the Lord, and ſome more publick convincing providences both of judgment and mercy do ſolemnly invite men, to obſerve the accompliſhment of the word therein; yea, no time hath wanted ſomething of a publick witneſs from ungodly men, even greateſt mockers of religion, who under that conſtraining power of conſcience at death, or in ſome day of their ſtrait, have been forced to ſeal the truth by a very open confeſſion of the righteouſneſs of God towards them; and this is indeed the Lord's bleſſed deſign in making his works ſometimes ſo conſpicuous, that they may not only confirm the faith of his people, but render atheiſm inexcuſable, that the glory of his faithfulneſs, as well as of his power and wiſdom may ſhine forth before the ſons of men. I confeſs we may wonder, why the world looketh ſo little upon this, and how the conviction of ſo great a truth, which they cannot ſhun, doth not more preſs them; but the Holy Ghoſt doth fully reſolve this, the brutiſh man knoweth not, neither do fools lay to heart, how the ſcripture taketh place, that flouriſhing of wicked men, is but in judgment for their further ruin. To proſecute this argument a little, there are ſome ſpecial truths I would inſtance, wherein the faithfulneſs of God in fufilling his word may be ſeen by the world, yea, is obvious to the moſt ordinary obſervers, and though they be but a few, which I ſhall here touch, yet I muſt ſay, they are ſuch concerning truths, and have ſo near a reference to the foundation of our faith, that men cannot acknowledge the ſame, but muſt alſo confeſs the ſcriptures divinity, and that there is a truth and reality in godlineſs and in chriſtian religion; I may truly here with ſome confidence challenge the greateſt atheiſts, yea, appeal to their conſcience and ſerious thoughts, if in theſe following inſtances (though but a little of what might be ſaid on ſuch a ſubject) the truth and accompliſhment of the ſcripture be not very manifeſt.

I. I ſhall firſt hold forth this truth, that *man is ſurely fallen from that excellent eſtate wherein once he was formed, Rom.* v. 18, 19. and now is not that which he was at the beginning; a truth ſo clear, that we may ſay even without the diſcovery of the word might be eaſy for any ſerious beholder to diſcern the ſame, yea, had not even heathens ſome glance at this? the evidenee whereof they could not altogether ſhun. It is true, the cauſe and original of this dreadful contagion, how ſin entered into the world, how it is derived to the whole race of man, imputation, as well as inheſion, how that poiſon is carried from the fountain to the ciſtern, the ſcripture doth only diſcover; but this I am ſure may be obvious to all, that poor man is thus ſick, and diſeaſed, and now beareth the marks of ſuch a fall and ruin, as we read of in the word. I confeſs, it is ſtrange, that when this is ſo very convincing and manifeſt, it ſhould not force men to ſome more ſerious enquiry, whence ſuch a thing is, or if there can be a recovery of ſo ſad and deſperate like caſe; but to clear this a little, I would offer theſe three things to be conſidered.

1. That there is ſome remainder of that excellent fabrick, which may yet appear among its ruins, ſome print and appearance (though dark) of that primitive luſtre and beauty, ſome draughts which ſin hath not wholly worn out, that may clearly tell what man once was, and point out his former excellency, that he hath been an other weight, of whom *Abſalom*'s character might be truly ſaid, without all blemiſh from the head to the foot. For we ſee the deep impreſſions of a deity ſtill rooted in men, even among the moſt wild and ſavage, which no invention can utterly raze, we ſee ſome common

principles

principles of reaſon that are imprinted in the moſt rude and ignorant, ſome innate notions and Ideas which the ſoul hath of good and evil, among all, and in every place of the earth, likewiſe theſe natural truths κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι which we may ſee are no ways impreſt on the ſoul from any objects of ſenſe, but ſuch whereto men by an unavoidable neceſſity are forced to aſſent, and beſides, what meaneth the witneſs of the conſcience, and authority thereof in every man, which they cannot poſſibly decline? O do not theſe witneſs that from ſome great height poor man hath fallen. 2. Doth not the preſent appearance of man's nature, clearly ſhew he is fallen into ſome dreadful diſeaſe, that it is ſurely overſpread with ſome horrid leproſy and contagion, the ſymptoms whereof now are moſt diſcernible. O what an exorbitancy doth appear in his deſires, with what contrary tides is he hurried? Still jarring with his preſent lot; his reaſon and will, once in a ſweet league, are now at war, betwixt which he is oft rent in pieces, as one betwixt wild horſes; how is he now reſtleſs in an unreaſonable purſuit, he laboureth in the fire, and for a ſhadow, yea, what do theſe tumults, and commotions of the earth mean, men upon the ſmalleſt account ſheathing their ſwords in others bowels, *homo homini lupus*, ruptures in familes, unſatiable in revenge, and the earth ſo oft in an uproar as a raging ſea. O do not theſe too viſibly witneſs what a dreadful diſorder and perturbation there muſt be within, impetuous boyling of man's luſts, ſo that here we may ſee a very manifeſt rupture, and breach of a building, once well knit and framed. 3. I would ask wherein man's true advantage and excellency above others of the creatures can be ſeen, if not with ſome reſpect to that he once was, and that bleſſed reſtauration by grace; for his knowledge doth oft ſerve but to increaſe his ſorrow, to ſhew the good he wanteth, and the evil he is ſubject to; is there any of the creatures ſubject to ſuch outward miſery and pain, to ſo many diſeaſes? Yea, as to a ſenſual life, may we not ſay the beaſts have even ſome preference? Or are theſe ſo unruly? Do they ſo much go out of their bounds and ſtation? Which the many laws made for man in the world with the convincing neceſſity thereof can witneſs; we ſee alſo that ſore travel is appointed to man; at how much toil he is for an outward ſubſiſtance, how he doth oft ſow, and not reap; the beaſts withdraw from the yoke, theſe over whom he had dominion ready to aſſault him, how women bring forth their children in ſorrow, the men are attended with fear, their life oft made bitter with care and labour, yea, as men increaſe in the world, their care and diſcontent increaſing therewith, but beſides all, is he not in the greateſt ſlavery of all the creatures through the violence of his luſts? That make him purſue the bait, though he knoweth it will undo him, whilſt his corruption doth oft like a ſtrong man bind him in fetters, and his fleſh imperiouſly drag him at its heels; O may we not ſay, was poor man thus framed at the beginning? or raiſed ſo far above the reſt of the creatures only to make him the more miſerable, for truly, if a lively portraicture could be drawn of ſinful depraved nature, there is none ſo groſs but ſhould abhor, yea, be affrighted, to ſee that in the third perſon, with which alaſs, they ſo friendly comply in themſelves.

II. *That ſo great a change is truly wrought upon men in converſion*, as the ſcripture doth promiſe, and hold forth, *Joh.* iii. 3, 6. *Eph.* ii. 1, 5. *Coloſſ.* iii. 1, 2. wherein ſome thing above nature, even the marvelous power of the grace of God may be ſeen, is a truth I am ſure known, and undeniable to the world, yea, the greateſt mockers at religion muſt confeſs, can be no deluſion, but is indeed real, and certain; upon theſe following grounds.

1. That the moſt groſs, who in their practice have been notoriouſly profane, in the place wherein they lived, it hath been ſeen, how grace hath

reached

reached them, and thus the leopard hath been made to change his ſpots, and ſuch who were accuſtomed to do evil have learned to do well. O! do not many famous inſtances witneſs this, in every age? 2. That alſo men ſtrongly principled in their judgment againſt the way of God, who were wont to deride holineſs as fancy, even on ſuch, ſo great a change hath been wrought as hath made the world to wonder; but then they were forced to lay down their prejudice, yea, to wonder at themſelves, how they could ſtand before the truth ſo long, whereof they have got ſuch an impreſſion; ſure atheiſts muſt grant there have been as profeſt atheiſts as themſelves, who have been made eminent examples of grace. 3. That ſuch even in the height of their wickedneſs, like *Paul* breathing out cruelty, and of late *Vergerius* while he was writing againſt the truth, grace hath ſometimes reached them, it hath been found that of Chriſt's greateſt enemies, ſome have thus fallen upon their high places before the power of the word; ſome ſuch trophies of the goſpel's conqueſt have been conſpicuous in every age; yea, it is oft ſeen that ſome remarkable height in ſin, hath proved an evident *Criſis* and turn in mens condition either to judgment or mercy. 4. That ſome of eminent adverſaries of the truth have through grace, been made eminently uſeful inſtruments in the church, the world cannot deny, that there have not been choicer veſſels of honour, more zealous for the Lord in their time, than ſuch, who were once moſt violent in their oppoſition. 5. That ſuch whom the world did reckon moſt wiſe and diſcerning, yea, that did want no judgment to know the value of outward things, as well as others, grace hath reached; can the atheiſts object, do any of the rulers or *Rabbies* believe in Chriſt, or follow that way, when it is ſo clear that not more wiſe, learned and judicious (even themſelves being judges) have been in their time, than ſome who are moſt ſerious in the matter of religion. 6. Hath not this change been made diſcernible upon the ſimple, the moſt ſtupid and dull, yea, upon ſome ſuch, as a natural incapacity might have obſtructed the work, if ſomething above nature had not carried it on, which may be alſo manifeſt by ſome change even on their underſtanding, to ſhew that this can make the ſimple wiſe, and in the way of holineſs, the way faring man tho' fool ſhall not err. 7. That by a very improbable mean, the word, and that ſometimes by weakeſt inſtruments, we ſee this great change hath been wrought, and it is remarkable how little of the work of converſion did follow the putting forth of miracles in the primitive times, but by the ſimplicity of the preached goſpel much more, for indeed the converſion of a ſoul, and ſuch a change is it ſelf ſome way a miracle. 8. That they are not a few on whom this change hath been wrought is undeniable; and truly beſides theſe ordinary proofs, I think it is a great want there ſhould not be ſome more ſpecial record by the church, of theſe illuſtrious, and eminent inſtances of the grace of God, which have been in ſuch an age, as well as remarkable inſtances of judgment. 9. Men muſt ſee this falleth not out at an adventure which is wrought upon one, and not on other, while both are alike diſcerning, yea, ſome who ſeem furtheſt from the grace of God, very groſs and rude, have been taken, when the more civil and refined, and of a more promiſing natural diſpoſition have been paſt by. O doth not this witneſs the grace of God, and ſoveraignity thereof. 10. Is not this change oft diſcernible upon men in a time while no advantage from without doth appear? Even times of perſecution and hazard, from which many have dated their firſt acquaintance with God, when they could expect nothing but a ſuffering lot, ſure there muſt be ſomething above nature in it. 11. It is alſo known how great a cloud of witneſſes have ſealed this truth, O! can there be ſuch an univerſal enchantment, that in every age, in ſeveral, yea,

in

in moſt remote places of the earth, hath fallen upon ſo many, who have witneſſed the power of the goſpel; or can all theſe be void of underſtanding? What gain, or outward advantage could they deſign in that which is ſo uſually attended with outward hazard and loſs, or what credit from men, while it maketh them the very butt of the world's hatred and reproach? Yea, can it be thought that all theſe could have combined to conſpire into ſo great a cheat? I muſt appeal atheiſts to their ſerious thoughts of this matter. 12. The marvelous effect of this change, doth it not witneſs this is no fancy or deluſion, when men are reached with ſuch a ſtroke, and by one word, as hath made the ſtout hearted and moſt daring to tremble, and to ſhew by their very countenance, that there is an other tribunal than man's, before which they are arraigned? Muſt it not be ſad earneſt and a marvelous power, that can make ſo willing a divorce betwixt men and their idols, which were once as their right-eye to them, and beat them off that ground of ſelf-righteouſneſs, which they had been ſo long eſtabliſhing to themſelves, that ſhould cauſe them alſo choſe the reproach of Chriſt, and his croſs before any outward advantage, and abandon that ſociety, without which ſometimes they could not live? Muſt not this ſpeak forth ſomething above natural reaſon. O! may not the world oft wonder what is become of their old friends, though I confeſs, this ſhould rather put them with wonder and aſtoniſhment, to ſome ſerious enquiry, whence ſo great a change can be.

(¶) It is ſtrange the world does not more wonder at *Converſion* which is ſo great a miracle, yea, may be ſaid one of the greateſt that hath been in the earth, ſince it is no leſs marvelous, than to raiſe out of the grave ſuch who are truly dead; O how convincingly demonſtrative is this of the truth and reality of grace, yea, even to the view of the world does witneſs an irreſiſtible efficacious power with the word, that converteth the ſoul, enlightens the eye, and maketh wiſe the ſimple, *Pſal.* xix. 7. Should we not with aſtoniſhment look on a chriſtian if we did ſeriouſly conſider what a change a the grace of God makes here, from that he once was, and how great a change glory will e'er long make from that he now is; I know there are many things we wonder at from our ignorance; but oh! it is mens ignorance and eſtrangement from this, makes it ſo little their wonder, for, if we be aſſuredly perſuaded of the truth of *converſion* which the world cannot deny, without a contradiction both to ſenſe and reaſon, we have then three great truths unanſwerably demonſtrate. 1. That the ſcripture of God is faithful and true, which holds this forth. 2. That there is a divine ſpirit, and a power above nature, that does certainly accompany the ſame. 3. It is then clear, there are two contrary ſtates in another world, ſince they are here ſo manifeſt: Now beſides theſe evidences already mentioned, I would here offer ſome further upon ſo grave and weighty a ſubject, to ſhew how very clear and convincing the demonſtration of this truth is, that the world cannot but ſee the very immediate power of God and ſomething above nature in *converſion*, if they do not ſhut their eyes thereat; conſider but theſe.

1. Is it not a ſtrange and marvelous thing that could change one ſpecies of a creature into another, turn a wolf or tyger into a lamb, ſure this would be aſtoniſhing; yet ſuch a change is here, which makes ſo vaſt a difference betwixt one and himſelf, takes him off his former delights and exerciſes, his old friends and ſociety, with whom he once thought the time ſhort, yea, cauſe the man who was a perſecutor of the truth, and took pleaſure therein, rejoice to ſuffer perſecution on that ſame account; I think the world will not debate, where ſo many known inſtances are at all times obvious. 2. Is

it not marvelous which can estrange men from their worldly interests, and take their heart off that which was as their right eye, and subdue under them that which once took them captive at its pleasure: O does it not shew they have got their eyes opened to see things which were formerly hid! yea, how strange is it that these whose prædominant was love to the world, and have been in their natural disposition most narrow and griping, that they could not allow themselves the comfortable use of that they had, even these this change hath so powerfully reached to cause a willing surrender and quitting of all for Christ: I could offer known instances concerning this, and these at as great an advantage then in the exercise of their judgment and reason as ever, whom the world might see were most serious and composed therein. 3. Would you debate the efficacious power of that which should melt and dissolve the hardest stone, and may you not wonder what a power this must be, which will make men melt and dissolve in tears and stand trembling before the word, who through their life were known to be most obdured and stupid; Yea, is not this great change sometimes with such terror and grief ushered in, that may convince onlookers it is a matter of greatest earnest and no counterfeit; and surely these must be reached by some power, before which there is no standing, 4. How great a thing is that which takes men at unawares beyond their thoughts and intention: *Matthew* and those other disciples did not know in the morning what should befal them before night; it was indeed a happy day, when on their return they had that account to give, we have found the *Messias*, and it is sure, many since have been thus surprised, yea, in one hour have got such a sight which will never go from their heart, they now see what report could never have made them believe, they now know what it is to be taken out of a dreadful gulf of darkness unto a marvelous light; and truely there is this usually discernible in it, how some one word will force its passage and take fire within as a word beyond all others fitly spoken and fitted by divine appointment to open the heart. 5. It is a marvelous change which does even reach young ones, and these sometimes of an age little above fancy, for it is certainly known how such whose years might shew there was no design to cheat the world, yea, sometime in a family where little advantage for their education hath appeared, have given evidence of this wonderfully, above themselves and their age, yea, at death have witnessed some power of the grace of God, and his spirit on their soul, their hope and the grounds of it, with such judgment and seriousness as hath forced on the beholders this discovery, of an immediate teaching of the spirit, and of a mighty power of God, that can witness in these, e'er they can well speak or exercise reason, the power of religion. O whence should this be! and truly for the truth thereof I could offer known instances, if it should be brought on debate. 6. What a change is it that does also reach men in their old age, who have been long rooted and inured to the world, who have sit many a call in their resisting the gospel; yet is it not seen how these in their old gray hairs, have been made to weep and confess after sixty or seventy years living under the gospel, that then only they begun to know what it is to be christians; I confess this is one of the rare trophies of the grace of God, yet no age wants some such instances to prove, how far grace can prevail over nature, custom, education and all these disadvantages which use to follow the time of old age. 7. What a strange power is it which hath been so evidently witnessed on some horridly flagitious, who have out-run others in all manner of wickedness; yea, even then whilst justice was crying for punishment to cut them off, grace hath stept in to save,

and

and reached them at a ſcaffold or gibbet; it is ſure the world cannot queſtion this truth, and O ſhould it not be convincing to ſee two brought to a publick death, for ſome groſs crime who have the ſame hazard before them, the ſame means made uſe of for their conviction, yet the one melting in contrition, the other moſt obdured; you cannot ſay that this is from a different nature and conſtitution, ſince ſometimes thoſe of a more promiſing nature and better diſpoſition have been ſeen further off, than ſuch of whom leaſt was expected. 8. Is it not a ſtrange change, which even on thoſe where no ordinary means could be ſubſervient, can be witneſſed, where no company, no example, no uſual way for inſtruction can be alledged, ſo that it may be ſeen, they have been truly taught of the Lord, that there is ſuch a thing as his immediate teaching; that in a very extraordinary way by means moſt improbable he can convey himſelf in to the ſoul, in a word, this can be no reſult of one's natural complexion, for then it would appear in, and accompany their younger years in ſome meaſure, and grow up with them; this change alſo in thoſe of moſt different natures, moſt unlike and croſs to others humor and diſpoſition is made diſcernible; yea, muſt it not be ſomething above moral ſuaſion, or any perſuaſives of human eloquence? Since here the fooliſhneſs of preaching is found more effectual than any ſuch way; yea, it is ſeen how the moſt ſublime and poliſhed ſtrains of oratory, and greateſt gifts have oft come ſhort of that ſucceſs, which hath followed more improbable means; I ſhall add, O is this not ſomething above nature which makes men partake of the divine nature, and does ſo viſibly impreſs the image of God on them. I ſhall ſhut this up with three remarkable inſtances of the power and efficacy of grace in *converſion*, of which in every age there may be a large record.

Firſt, that excellent man *Junius*, whoſe life we have in ſome meaſure ſet down by himſelf, with many notable remarks of providences, and therein ſhews the Lord's engaging him at firſt, how being very looſe, and carried away with evil company, yea, tempted to atheiſm, he was one day moved to go and read the ſcripture; and at the firſt opening met with that of the firſt of *John*; which whilſt he read as he ſays did ſuddenly aſtoniſh him; and leave a marvelous conviction on his ſoul, of the divinity of the ſubject, the majeſty and authority of the writing; that all day he knew not where, and what he was; but thus turns himſelf with theſe words to the Lord, Thou waſt mindful of me, O my God, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies; yea, gives this account, that he had then had a ſight of the ſcripture, which made him ſee it did exceed all human eloquence, and this was followed with ſuch power that his body trembled, and his mind became aſtoniſhed, with ſuch a ſurpriſing and marvelous light; and from that day begun to be ſerious in the way of the Lord.

A ſecond inſtance I ſhall offer is, the remarkable *converſion* of worthy Mr. *Bolton*, a choice miniſter in the church of *England*, in whoſe life this is recorded, that being eminently prophane, an horrid ſwearer, and much accuſtomed to mock at holineſs, and thoſe who moſt ſhined therein, and particularly that excellent man of God Mr. *Perkins*, then preacher in *Cambridge*, whom he much undervalued for his plainneſs in preaching the truths of God, yea, was near the length of *Popery*; but on the Lord's gracious appearance to him, was put to have other thoughts, with a very remarable change upon him, though with that terrour, that as he ſaid himſelf, the Lord ſeemed to run upon him, like a giant, throwing him to the ground, and with ſuch a terrifying diſcovery of ſin, cauſed him to roar in anguiſh, and oft riſe in the night on that account, which continued for diverſe months; yea, theſe aſ-

ſauls

faults in the pangs of the new birth were such, that it might have been said, *Ut nec color, nec sensus, nec sanguis supereſſet*; but at last a blessed sunshine broke up, and shone bright.

Now besides these two great men, I think it not unsuitable, since it is to commend the grace of God, and witness the reality thereof, who of all kind of sinners, as well as of all kindreds and nations, hath brought some to glory, that I set down one very strange instance in this country, of a poor buggerer who not many years ago was put to death in the town of *Air*, for that horrid wickedness, he had been a most stupid and brutish person, such an one who looked to all who knew him, as if he had been above the reach of ordinary means; but in the prison, the Lord did marvelously witness the power of his grace, and in such a measure discovered to him his sinfulness, that after much serious exercise upon his soul, and sore wrestling, a most kindly work of repentance did appear, with great assurance, so that when he came to the stake, he could not cease from crying out to the people, under the sense of pardon, and that comforting sun-shine of the presence of God; *O he is a great forgiver, he is a great forgiver*; and had therewith these words; now hath perfect love cast out all fear, I know God hath nothing to lay against me, for Jesus Christ hath payed all, and those are free whom the Son makes free, thus in a transport of wonder and joy, did he die; the marvelous grace of God raising him then above other men, who not long before, seemed in some respect, below a beast. (¶)

III. *That communion and fellowship with God*, whereto the saints are in this life admitted, and brought near to him in the spirit, *is a most real thing*, and no delusion, is a truth which may be very convincingly demonstrate, even to the view of the world, and to such who are but onlookers on the same, 1 *Joh.* i. 3. *Phil.* iii. 20. I know this is a truth that must be spiritually discerned, and therefore the world cannot know it or reach that unspeakable joy and delight which is found by the saints in that sweet path; yet must say there are some things, and some such convincing evidences, as may witness to men, and rationally demonstrate the same; the conviction whereof they cannot possibly shun, if they but come near, and in their serious thoughts consider.

1. How great and excellent a company do bear this testimony, even as many as in every time did ever serve God in the spirit; is not this transmitted by the fathers to the children as their experience? And as certainly tried by succeeding ages, a truth which is not once, or twice proved in the christian's life, for the proofs thereof are innumerable, and past reckoning, which they have had, yea, amongst all the saints since the days of *Abel*, to this present time, there was never one contradictory witness could be produced. 2. Are not these who do thus testify, what they have oft found in secret retirements to God, such whose testimony in any other matter, the worst of men could not refuse to deny to be famous, I am sure the world is convinced, that the followers of Christ dare not, yea, use not to deal falsely in other things with those they have to do with, how ever their malice carry them to reproach them, yea, that they are more to be credited than such, who make a scorn of religion. 3. Have they not had as great interest and share of the world as others, and been of as discerning spirits to know the true value of things, who from their experience do not only declare, there is an undoubted reality in converse with God, but that the joy and delight herein which they have found, is above all the pleasures of the flesh. O! what must that be which could make such who wanted not outward allurements,

who

who had not loſt their taſte, and were fleſh and blood as well as others to turn their back on all for Chriſt, and by their walk teſtify they have found ſome more ſatisfying enjoyment in fellowſhip with God? 4. Muſt not this be very obvious and convincing, that when men once become ſerious in the way of God, they have got ſome new acquaintance, that ſure there is another world, and ſome other ſociety than that of men with which they have intercourſe; whence are theſe frequent retirements, from which they have been ſeen ſo oft to come forth with greateſt ſatisfaction, and with ſome remarkable change in their caſe, doth it not thus appear, *They are not alone, when they are alone* yea, in ſuch a ſolitude muſt find ſomething very deſirable? 5. Is not this alſo teſtifyed in times, when men could not well diſſemble, or be ſuſpected of deceit, in times of great outward affliction, when the world alſo hath beenmoſt tempting, with its offers, yea, at death when they are ſtepping over that threſhold; a time, wherein the words of dying men are of greateſt weight and credit, the ſpirits of ſuch being then more unbyaſſed, and free of thoſe ordinary temptations wherewith others are ſwayed. How oft have they at ſuch times declared that ſurely God is familiar with men, which they have found, and though they were going to change their place, yet were not to change their company. 6. Can that be a deluſion which is ſo ſenſible in the preſent time, whereof the ſaints are not more ſure that they live, than they are ſure of this truth, what near approaches and refreſhing views they have got, while God hath come near to their ſoul, what a diſcernible elevation of their ſpirits doth go along with this? Yea, on the other hand, as the withdrawing hereof is very ſenſible to themſelves, is there not ſomething of this even obvious to byſtanders, how great a change and difference this will make in their caſe, from other times, which they cannot get hid. 7. Doth not ſomething of this truth appear on the very countenance and outward carriage of chriſtians, what a luſtre and reſemblance of heaven, a holy ſtaiedneſs and compoſure of ſpirit, when they have been brought near God, in ſecret converſe with him, and taken up to the mountain; in a word, doth not the walk of a ſerious mortified chriſtian convincingly witneſs this, yea, cannot but be ſome way aſtoniſhing to the world, what ſhould make them look ſo well, and with ſuch ſatisfaction, when there is no viſible cauſe for it, when ſhut up in priſon from converſe with friends, and acquaintance? Sure men will not think a rational ſpirit ſo demented to quit their former pleaſures, and chuſe the croſs that they may only deceive the world, with a counterfeit joy and ſatisfaction, if they did not really find the ſame; and while it is too too evident, what adreadful ſociety and commerce many have with the Devil, ſhould any queſtion or debate, whether the ſaints have truly communion and fellowſhip with God the father of ſpirits, whom they ſerve and worſhip.

IV. *That the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*, *Prov.* xii. 26. And hath an other ſpirit which is greater and more choice, than that which is in the world, is a truth which I am ſure, men notwithſtanding all their prejudice muſt needs confeſs, and that therein the ſcripture is truly verifyed, when ſuch clear and convincing evidences, do ſtare them in the face, I confeſs the ſaints are much under a dark cloud here, through the prevalency of corruption, yea, are oft accounted as the filth of the world, but when grace in any greater meaſure, and its vigorous exerciſe doth ſhew it ſelf, then there appeareth ſo much as will darken all the grandeur of this earth, and force men to ſee an excellency upon the ſaints, beyond any others, they cannot altogether ſhun ſuch a conviction. Firſt, what an evident difference is betwixt their way, who walk with God, and that of the moſt poliſhed

moraliſt, ſomething is in the one which doth witneſs a more excellent ſpirit, an higher elevation, a ſweet harmony and equability in their way, that they move in ſome higher ſphere, act from other principles, with a reſpect to ſome greater intereſt than any thing here, have more of a large heart to ſerve their generation, than thoſe whoſe ſelf-intereſt is ſeen to be the firſt and laſt in all their motions. 2. May it not alſo appear to onlookers that tender ſerious chriſtians who live near God, do truly witneſs their reſemblance, and likeneſs to him to whom they move, as to their great and laſt end; yea, do evidence a more true excellency of ſpirit, what a ſweet calm and ſerenity they have within, while going through things that are moſt croſs and vexing; with what diſcernible quietneſs theſe can look upon moſt affrightning revolutions in the world, as ſuch, whoſe treaſure and great intereſt is beyond hazard, though the earth were all turned to aſhes. 3. Is there not ſo much in the way and carriage of the ſaints, yea, ſuch a majeſty and authority, that attendeth holineſs, as doth force reſpect and fear, even from theſe who moſt hate them, yea, and doth force men to juſtify ſuch in their conſcience, whom they openly reproach and perſecute; whence it is that a ſerious watchful chriſtian, is oft a ſcar-crow and terror to the prophane, when there is no outward cauſe for it, but that they are ſtruck with the conviction of a more excellent ſpirit in theſe, carrying ſuch a reſemblance to the image of God as forceth fear and ſubjection from that ſpirit which is in the world. 4. Doth not a chriſtian and holy walk cauſe men ſhine, as a light in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation, yea, darken all their neighbours; and in the darkeſt night is it not ſeen how grace ſhineth with the greateſt luſtre, what a ſweet and odoriferous ſcent, doth this ſend through the country where they live, that may ſhew to all how great a difference there is betwixt ſuch, and thoſe who are wallowing in this puddle of the earth. 5. Is it not obvious what a luſtre and beauty, yea, ſomething more becoming our immortal ſoul that is in the ſelf-denial of chriſtians, their bearing injuries, forgiving ſuch as injure them, without reviling, than in that proud vindictive ſpirit that is in the world, that ſure ſuch walk by a more excellent rule, and move from a higher principle. 6. It may be alſo evident to the world, what an other ſpirit is in theſe, who do not bow with the ſpeate of every time, nor yield to men becauſe of their outward power, than in that ſpirit which is in the world, that while the one doth preſs men to ſave themſelves on any terms, the other doth cauſe the chriſtian take up his croſs, yea, lay down his life, to ſave his conſcience; and whence is that patience, and reſolution by which the godly in times of ſuffering have overcome their perſecutors, their bold avowing of the truth before men, when hazards are moſt obvious, and that advantage wherewith they appear above others in ſuch a time. O! doth it not clearly witneſs, they are of an other metal, who do thus abide the fire, yea, become more bright by that wherewith others are conſumed? I would add that which the world cannot deny, how this ſpirit which is in the ſaints, hath prevailed over the greateſt enticements of carnal gain and pleaſure, which to many may ſeem a wonder, as the popiſh party did once ſay of Luther, *Beſtia hæc non curat aurum,* that which they did ſpeak in contempt, that it did prove him a beaſt, did in effect ſhew him therein to be ſomething above men; for that is a thing before which the ſpirit of the world could never ſtand.

V. *That the promiſed encouragement which is held forth to the people of God under trouble and ſuffering for his name is a truth,* and the ſcripture herein verifyed, I am ſure not only chriſtian experience can witneſs, but may even

even to the obſervation of others, be demonſtrate from very convincing grounds, that it is no fancy or deluſion, *Pſal.* ix. 9. *Iſa.* li. 12.

1. The very countenance and outward appearance of the godly in a ſuffering time, doth oft declare the peace and tranquility of their ſoul, ſo as ſurely they muſt have joy and ſatisfaction from whence the world doth not know, and have ſome other correſpondence, than with things viſible, for it may be oft ſaid, as of *Daniel*, and his fellows that under greateſt preſſures, and a very mean condition, they look as well, yea, with as much chearfulneſs as thoſe who live on the king's allowance. 2. It can be no counterfeit, which ſhould thus reconcile the chriſtian with a ſuffering lot, for it is known how very ſearching affliction and trouble proveth, which oft doth broach the veſſel, and bring forth what hath formerly moſt cloſely lurked: and O! Doth not that holy confidence and freedom which the ſaints have evidenced in confeſſing the truth, before the princes of this world and their moſt cruel adverſaries, yea, that chearfulneſs which in moſt extreme parts of ſuffering they oft do witneſs, even when they are reſiſting to blood, doth not this ſpeak forth ſomething beyond the gallantry of a natural ſpirit, that far exceedeth the ordinary way of men, and is a thing the world cannot but wonder, and whether they will or not ſee God's very immediate help and hand in the ſame, according to his word? 3. Is it not ſeen how the cheerful way of the godly under ſuffering, while there is no outward ground for the ſame doth not only aſtoniſh, but is an exceeding torment to adverſaties? When they are forced to ſee, how all their endeavours (when their wrath and malice hath been to the outmoſt put forth) have yet been in vain, either to turn them aſide, or to ruin their encouragement, but that the moſt ſharp ſufferings of the godly, do ſtill give them the foreſt daſh, help to ſtrengthen others, juſtify God's way, and that tender reſpect he hath to his ſuffering people, even before all onlookers. 4. Is not alſo manifeſt, that ſuch whoſe natuaal diſpoſition was known to be very fainting and timorous, yet when called to ſuffer for the truth have without the leaſt appearance of diſcouragement, ſhowed an invincible reſolution, and not only their own fears, but the expectation of others hath a marvelous diſappointment. O is there not there a viſible fulfilling of the ſcripture, that ſhaking reeds ſhould be made to ſtand, where ſtrongeſt cedars have bowed, yea, ſome of very mean and ordinary parts have been ſo diſcernibly raiſed above themſelves, as they were made to confound the wiſe and learned. 5. Muſt it not be confeſſed that the zeal and reſolution of the ſaints did never more appear than in times of greateſt oppoſition? that at no time they have looked more like chriſtians with more advantage, and with ſome peculiar beauty and luſtre of the grace of God, than under ſuffering, a thing which as it eminently doth commend the goſpel, hath alſo ſo far convinced their enemies, as in ſome meaſure it hath blunted their edge, and taken off followers thereof. 6. I may appeal the greateſt atheiſts to their conſcience, if any moral arguments (whatever influence they may have upon mens patient enduring) could ever produce ſuch effects as rejoycing in tribulation, the chooſing affliction before ſin, and all its pleaſures, to triumph over perſecutors, and to go with ſuch a calm, and chearfulneſs to a ſcaffold, to ſing amidſt a dark priſon, yea, and to abound, and have all things under greateſt want? O! whence is this? ſure ſomething above nature muſt be here, that is ſtronger than moral reaſons, by which the ſaints have thus overcome the world, yea, is it not obvious to all who look on, how great a difference there is betwixt the pretended reſolution of a natural ſpirit in death and ſuffering, and that joy and confidence of a chriſtian, which hath then ſhewed itſelf in the compoſure and tranquility of their ſoul within?

within? The one being but a dark ſhadow, and the other drawn to the life.

VI. *That there is a conſcience within men, whoſe power both as a judge, and witneſs, doth anſwer that clear diſcovery, the ſcripture giveth thereof, Rom.* ii. 9. Is a thing obvious even to the world which they muſt needs confeſs both from its viſible effect on others, and the working thereof within themſelves; that herein the word is verifyed theſe things make it clear, and undeniable.

1. That ſure there is ſomething within which thus maketh men affraid to be alone with themſelves, yea, will cauſe them to go abroad, and frame diverſions to be out of its noiſe, muſt it not be ſad earneſt, which hath ſo dreadful a ſound in their ear, doth haunt the wicked man whether he will or not? wherewith he would gladly be at peace, but amidſt his greateſt mirth and proſperity, this doth mingle his wine with gall and wormwood. 2. Is it not alſo ſure that men have oft an accuſer within their breaſt, while they ſeem to brave it out before others, whoſe judgment, and ſentence they can by no means decline, but after the committing of ſin, yea, on the back of their ſinful pleaſures doth follow the ſame with a bitter ſting, and ring this dreadful knell in their ear, that in the end their way will be bittetneſs! O! is not this an accuſing conſcience, which doth begin the torment of ſome before the time? 3. What is it that ſhould make mens guilt ſometimes legible in their countenance, even when they ſtudy moſt to conceal it, and thus cauſe them to give their tongue the lie, yea, diſcover to byſtanders whether they will or not, ſome ſecret trouble and ſore they have within, doth it not clearly ſhew the power of the conſcience, which hath ſuch authority on men, that without violence or conſtraint from others, doth even force them to confeſs the truth, and ſupply the room of witneſſes? 4. Whence is it ſome are ſo much diſquieted for ſecret ſins, which the eyes of others could not reach, yea, that ſome groſs ſins, even the moſt profligate amongſt men have an horror at them without reſpect to outward hazard, doth it not ſhew the power of a natural conſcience, that holdeth forth a greater party than the world with which they have to do, to whom all things are manifeſt, and ſome greater witneſs than that of man? 5. How is it that even greateſt men whom the world could not reach, and in the midſt of all probable advantages have yet often moſt affrightning thoughts, much terror, and diſquieting reflections! muſt it not be from within which doth cauſe them fear an other power than that of man? 6. What muſt it be which doth force men to juſtify God when his hand doth purſue them, and maketh them ſo eaſily find out ſin in a time of their ſtrait, why is the ſenſe of guilt ſo very affrightning at death, is it not the conſcience which doth preſage a future judgment, and extend its power to matters of an everlaſting concernment and duration? 7. What ſhould make men tremble at the word and ſo much hate a ſearching miniſtry, is it not becauſe the light doth torment them, though the word doth particularly name none, but that there is ſomething within, which maketh application of the truth, and doth plainly ſay, thou art the man? 8. How do the worſt of men oft juſtify theſe in ſecret, whom they openly have condemned, that while they are even perſecuting the ſaints for truth and holineſs, yet, for theſe they give them, and their way a favourable teſtimony, over the belly of all their prejudices, yea, what is it that doth cauſe a ſecret fear, and awful regard of ſuch whom they hate, doth it not ſhew ſomething within, whoſe judgment they are not able to reſiſt? 9. I muſt further ask whence is that horror, and theſe dreadful cries and groans which wicked men oft have in their ſickneſs, even ſuch who were wont to ſport at ſin, with a daring countenance; can the world get this paſt without ſome remark, how

in-

intolerable a thing an evil conſcience is, when once let looſe, when in all ages ſuch terrifying examples of this kind have been ſet up for all that paſt by to look on, ſuch as *Spira*, *Latomus*, *Olivarius*, &c and truly, I think it is a great want there ſhould not be a more particular record of ſuch, which would give atheiſm ſo great a daſh, yea force men to confeſs the truth of a deity, and of the written word.

(¶) This is a great truth, and a great demonſtration of God (O bleſſed for ever) his being, and of the truth of his word, that there is a CONSCIENCE, ſo ſtrange a power, which every man hath within him and over him, that forceth the ſoul to a reflection on its ſelf even when it trembles at that ſight, and with an awful ſound tells the atheiſt there is a God, when he ſeems to have no fear or conviction thereof; this is that great torment and troubler of the world, from which there is no retreat, though one ſhould flee to the uttermoſt parts of the earth, this keeps a high court of juſtice under the authority of the great judge, and there without reſpect of perſons do's ſummond great and ſmall, do's arreſt bring in witneſs, ſentences, yea, in ſome meaſure puts that in execution, and can make hell begin there, by an unexpreſſible anguiſh and horrour: It is ſtrange that ſuch a thing when it is ſo undeniable do's not ſtare the world in the face with more amazement, but I ſhall further offer ſome few evidences of the truth beſides theſe already mentioned.

1. Could there be ſuch a power in man to difference betwixt that good and evil which is within him, if there were not alſo ſome higher power above him, who hath thus form'd him, with ſuch principles? Yea, could there be a judging and witneſſing within a man, if there were not a law and rule over him: for it is ſure the conſcience in all its actings hath reſpect to a higher judgment, and to a law, which, even natures light, though very dim, holds forth, but is expreſs and clear in the ſcripture which is that great rule of the conſcience. 2. Is it not very ſtrange to ſee ſuch a power within a man, and yet againſt him, that the groſſeſt Atheiſt is an enemy to it, yet cannot be without it, or get it ſhaken off, and whilſt it is known how ſtrong a byaſs and inclination theſe have to evil, more than good, they are yet forced to juſtify the one more than the other, the drunkard cannot drown this conviction, nor the worldling bury it in the earth, where his treaſure lies. 3. Tho' men may come ſome length to divert the conſcience and ſilence it, that it cannot exercile its function, without ſome ſpecial divine excitation, yet is it not manifeſt how then, when once it is awaked, there is no poſſible withſtanding, then the ſtout hearted cannot keep his ground to debate with it; yea, when they run it follows with as ſwift a pace, no skill, no arguments can defend from its force, no violence againſt ſuch a power, but whilſt in the convoy of ſin, they over-reach the witneſs of men, lo, this is continually at hand to tell them, that he who is greater than the conſcience, do's regard. 4. Can any thing be more real and certain, than theſe effects of the conſcience, I mean that trouble and fear men have in ſinning, and that peace and ſatisfaction that attends well doing? Do you know ſuch a place of the earth whither this power hath got ſome place to overaw men, even without any viſible awe or hazard; and can all mankind, through the whole world, in all ages be in ſo ſtrange a deluſion, if there were no real ground for it. 5. How convincingly do's this witneſs there is a conſcience, and the reality of it, that men are at ſo much work to bribe it, to frame diverſions thereto, yea, to find out falſe grounds of peace, and ſome ſuch gloſs and commentary, as may reconcile the rule with their groſſeſt actings and exorbitancies, and why is this, but that in out-daring it, they find it ſtronger than they, and therefore muſt counterwork, by darkening that great light and find out ſome ſhew of reaſon to ſi-

lence conſcience, and promiſe peace to themſelves, though they walk in the wickedneſs of their heart. 6. Do not theſe extremes, which oft are obvious in mens condition, witneſs the reality of this power? O what a marvelous thing to ſee one ſtupid this day, and deſperate the next, the conſcience breaking up, at that rate, that to be rid thereof and its torment, the poor man would ſeek a ſhelter in the grave; yea, is it not uſual to ſee ſome wear out their time as beaſts, yet at dying ſeaſed with an inexpreſſible horror of God? is not this ſomething wakened, which was formerly aſleep? 7. Do not men ſee ſuch deſperate acts of wickedneſs in the world, ſuch furious running over all warnings and convictions, that may even convincingly ſhew ſome purſute of the conſcience, and that horrid way they take to be rid of it by revenge, to give it a further wound and ſilence to noiſe, by ſome violent deep ſtroke. 8. Are not theſe ſudden and unexpected flaſhes of the conſcience moſt remarkable, how it takes ſome unawares, and grows upon them the more they ſtrive with it; it is known alſo, what reflections men uſually have on themſelves and their actions, in ſome preſent exigent and hazard; yea, how they are thus affrighted, or in ſome meaſure quiet, as they are put to condemn or acquit themſelves on that ſcore: Now is not this a convincing witneſs of the force of a natural conſcience, and likewiſe that uſual recourſe which the worſt of men will in ſuch an extremity have to God by prayer, do's both declare this, and that impreſſion they have upon them of a Deity. 9. How marvelous a confidence and ſupport do's the conſcience afford where it is a friend, under the greateſt miſery and trouble from without, for thus a man's ſpirit can ſuſtain its infirmities, but when it is an adverſary nothing, nothing ſo unſupportable, it will torment and tear one within when there is none without dare provoke him; yea, cauſe the oppreſſor tremble, whilſt it upholds the oppreſſed with confidence, it makes the one eat his bread with joy, when it imbitters the pleaſant morſels of others. (5)

SEVENTH, *That there is a reward for the righteous and unqueſtionable gain in godlineſs*, is a part of the ſcripture not only well known, and witneſſed to the obſerving chriſtian in his experience, but is alſo held forth in every age, as in great letters to the view of the world, *Pſal.* lviii. 11. *Pſal.* xcvii. 11. *Iſa.* iii. 10. It is true that the chriſtian's lot is oft followed with much trouble, and ſometimes with loſs of his life, which may ſeem to have a very diſmal aſpect, for that great goodneſs which the man who feareth God hath enſured to him is much laid up in another world; but it is alſo ſure that there are ſuch publick convincing proofs of this truth held forth even to the obſervation of men, by which the Lord hath in every age confirmed the ſame, that I am ſure the greateſt atheiſt cannot anſwer even theſe.

1. That this is the very dictate of a natural conſcience not only that God is, but that he is a rewarder of ſuch as ſerve him, yea, none amongſt men are ſo brutiſh who are not in ſome meaſure principled to difference betwixt good and evil, with ſome fear of a puniſhment to the one, and ſome hope of recompence to the other, and are alſo forced to notice ſome more ſignal and convincing examples, which have been of that kind in their time. 2. Muſt we not ſay, yea, doth not the world ſee in every age that hiſtory of *Joſeph* in ſome part acted over again? Sure there have not been wanting many ſuch remarkable inſtances, wherein it might be eaſy to trace an upright and ſtraight walk through a very maze and labyrinth of changes, and to ſhow how that hath been their condition, and at laſt integrity hath brought them to land in a comfortable harbour, yea how often they have had a marvelous unlooked for deliverance, contrary to all human appearance, this indeed is no romance, but a moſt true hiſtory which through all times, and many examples, might

be

be written of the word and providence, which ſhould ſurpaſs the richeſt fancy that any fiction, or romance did ever contain. 3. Muſt it not be convincing, even to the worſt of men, what a viſible bleſſing doth oft follow the mean lot of ſome of the ſaints which can make their little reach far, and cauſe them abound more in their poverty than others amidſt their abundance, which I think the world cannot ſhun to obſerve and gather that there is, ſure, ſomething elſe than mens own care, which doth their buſineſs; and how that ordinary proverb falleth not to the ground, *That it is better to be happy than wiſe*, when they ſee a ſecret judgment blow upon ſome mens eſtate that no means can prevent, and a ſecret bleſſing which maketh things proſper and take effect, accompany the chriſtians ſmall portion, ſo as it may be eaſy for ſuch who look abroad to ſee where real contentment with chearfulneſs, and giving of thanks, uſeth to dwell. 4. May not the world ſee there is a feaſt in a good conſcience how little ſoever they partake of the world, that well doing, and the practice of godlineſs hath ſome preſent reward in its hand; whereas ſo remarkable a difference may be diſcerned betwixt the countenance and carriage of ſuch, and of them who truſt in falſehood, that ſurely in a time of ſtrait, theſe have another kind of ſecurity and confidence, when greateſt natural ſpirits fail, yea, that theſe alone can enjoy themſelves, have moſt calm and compoſed ſpirits amidſt the ſeveral changes of their life, that according to outward things, their peace doth not ebb nor flow, but they are at a ſeen advantage above others in the day when men are ſore outwitted with their ſtraits, ſo as it will be moſt eaſy then to ſee the good and advantage of religion, when the vanity of other advantages is moſt diſcernible. 5. Is it not alſo ſeen that true honour doth truly wait on humility, and followeth ſuch, but it fleeth from them who do moſt purſue it, yea, that faithfulneſs and an upright walk will gain credit even amongſt her enemies, and reſpect before the world. 6. That theſe who are faithful in their life, and diligent improvers of a ſmall talent have uſually more added with ſome diſcernible growth following the ſame, and as the drying up of the parts of ſome, as a judgment on unfaithfulneſs, is oft obvious, ſo alſo ſuch a bleſſing upon ſerious diligence, as hath made the laſt firſt, and even outrun ſuch who were once before them; yea, it is truly ſeen how grace helpeth mens gifts doth raiſe and ſublimate their ſpirits above that which once they were. 7. Doth not the Lord put ſome viſible difference oft betwixt the righteous, and the wicked in a time of common calamity? that a ſtrange deliverance with the concurrence of very marvelous providences, doth ſometime meet ſuch even to the conviction of beholders which may tell the world, ſuch have had an inviſible hedge of preſervation about them, and have been under ſome better care than their own. 8. What a clear witneſs do ungodly men oft bear to this truth, at their death, or at ſome other ſtrait, ſo that their conſcience hath forced them to juſtify the godly man's choice, and to ſay that the lot of ſuch is only moſt deſirable, yea, with much bitterneſs to lament their folly that made not religion more their buſineſs, the good and advantage whereof is no matter of debate; ſure the world will confeſs how oft the confeſſion, and teſtimony of ſuch men to this truth, hath reached their ear. 9. I ſhall but add that which is ſo very manifeſt, how faithfulneſs and integrity doth tranſmit mens name with more honour, yea make it have a ſweeter ſavour in their generations, than either riches or outward preferment; yea, that there is a great difference betwixt the memorial of the righteous and the wicked, even to the conviction of the world.

EIGHT, *That verily there is a God who judgeth in the earth*, *Pſal.* lviii. 11. who doth render unto men vengeance, and doth purſue the tranſgreſſor

becauſe

becauſe of ſin, is a truth which the world hath in every age by many convincing inſtances held forth to them, where they may ſee the ſcripture clearly verifyed.

I have a little touched this in the ſecond argument how the accompliſhing of ſcripture threatnings is witneſſed to the obſervation of the church, and to theſe who are wiſe to diſcern the times wherein they live; I ſhall here point at this truth, as it is in the providence of God, written in ſuch great letters, as are obvious to the view of the world, ſo as moſt common onlookers cannot paſs this without a remark; it is true much may be left to that great general aſſize of the laſt judgment, that day of retribution; yea, ſometimes we ſee the moſt wicked and vile go in peace to the grave; the ſoveraignty of God doth alſo appear very obſervably in the different meaſure and kind of puniſhment; and it is too evident how prone men are to look more to the intereſt that ſecond cauſes have in ſuch a thing, than to a divine hand; but this is alſo ſure that the Lord is known on the earth, by the judgment which he executeth, and in every age doth ſet up ſuch convincing examples before men, that the greateſt atheiſt may ſee, yea, oft their conſcience muſt break the goal, reſtrain it as they will, and force this acknowledgment, that ſuch judgments can be no caſual thing; while ſomething of a power higher than man, and a clear verifying of the word is ſo diſcernible therein. Now to demonſtrate this truth I would offer ſome things which may ſhew how very near this cometh to the obſervation of men, ſo as none can be a ſtranger thereto, or want conviction of this part of the truth of God, except they willingly ſhut their eyes while it is clear.

1. That the very *Heathens* who never knew the ſcripture, nor a *written* law, have yet ſo much of a natural conſcience that not only they can put ſome difference between virtue and vice, but even in ſome meaſure can diſcern God's putting ſome difference betwixt the ſame; how flagitious crimes uſe to be puniſhed by a divine hand, we may ſay time could never yet wear out the obſervation of this truth through the world, and though many things may be received and credited, which not having a ſure ground do quickly evaniſh, it being truth's privilege ſtill to out-live falſhood, yet it is ſure, how in the darkeſt parts of the earth, this hath been ſtill noticed with a remark, and tranſmitted from one age to another, yea the records of the nations even by heathen writers ſhew what remarkable puniſhment hath followed cruel oppreſſion, covenant breaking, and ſuch other groſs ſins againſt the ſecond table, yea, how theſe have been the uſual forerunners of great ſtrokes on kingdoms and families.

II. Doth not the world ſee, that in theſe remarkable judgments which have come on a nation and people, there is ſomething higher than inſtruments, or ſecond cauſes, which may be very evident in bringing the ſame about; ſo that all who go by muſt confeſs, ſuch is no caſual thing, nor doth ariſe out of the duſt, but that ſurely a divine hand is there; and truly though ſome deſolating ſtrokes are very terrible in themſelves, and blood and ruins ſhould be no matter of pleaſure, yet whereas thereby that ſtately ſound is heard, even his voice who maketh the earth to tremble, and God is made known to the ſons of men, we ſhould not only with fear, but even ſome holy congratulation conſider his work, now to clear what a convincing witneſs theſe are to this truth, I ſhall point at ſome very obvious remarks, which I am ſure the world cannot contradict of the Lord's own immediate hand in ſuch judgments. 1. That ſtrange concurrence of providence which uſeth to appear when God is againſt a people, how all things will then conſpire as a fatal conjunction to work their woe and ruin, that men may ſee ſurely this is from the Lord, who is won-

wonderful in counſel, and from an hand againſt which there is no ſtriving. 2. How ſuch remarkable ſtrokes are ſeen to meet with ſome great and remarkable height of ſin in ſuch a nation and people, ſo that it is eaſy then for all onlookers to confeſs the righteouſneſs of God therein. 3. When judgment is coming on a land it may appear how inſtruments are raiſed, and in a more than ordinary way acted with all advantages for ſuch a piece of ſervice. 4. There is a viſible blaſting then both of counſel and ſtrength, and theſe means which otherways looked moſt probable; how remarkably ſuch are confounded even in the uſe of their ordinary abilities, their heart and uſual courage taken from them while the Lord is on a work of judgment. 5. That aſtoniſhing ſucceſs which is uſually ſeen to follow thoſe whom the Lord ſendeth forth to execute his judgment, how then they move ſwiftly and with vigour; they do not ſtumble, or weary, it is neither rivers or walled cities can ſtand in their way; mountains are made vallies to ſhew it is the Lord whoſe hand in that day is ſtrong upon them, to ſtrengthen their loins, and make the ſword and ax ſharp for his ſervice. 6. Amidſt theſe various ſtrokes which come on a land, can men paſs that of the *Peſtilence* without ſome ſpecial note, where God's immediate hand, ſomething ſupernatural above ordinary or natural cauſes may be clearly ſeen, both in its ſtrange progreſs in ſpreading, which like a lightning doth oft go through cities and countries in a ſmall time; do not theſe tell aloud to the world that they come not unſent, and without ſome ſpecial commiſſion; and that there is no ſtriving againſt them, nor are ordinary means effectual in ſome ſuch extraordinary plagues until he who brought it on, do alſo by his own hand take it off.

III. It is very obvious even to the world that clear reſemblance which is oft betwixt ſin and the ſtroke, how holy juſtice doth keep a proportion, and doth ſhape out the judgment ſo exactly both in meaſure and kind, that it may be eaſy to ſee the ſtroke pointing, as with an hand, to the cauſe by its diſcernible likeneſs, and both at the righteous judgment of God which thus meaſured out to men, as they have dealt with others: We ſee how the Lord tryſted *Agag* and *Adonibezek*, how *Sodom*'s burning luſt was puniſht with fire from heaven, yea, what even *David* had meaſured out for his murther and adultery; the ſword ſhall not depart from his houſe, and for the other, his wives by his own ſon abuſed, and truly every age's obſervation can witneſs this truth from many convincing examples, that there is a God who judgeth in the earth, it being oft ſeen if men would ſeriouſly obſerve. 1. How an univerſal overſpreading of ſin in a land, hath uſually ſome national, and univerſal ſtroke following. 2. That blood waiteth on bloody men, and ſuffereth them not oft to live out half their days; one oppreſſor puniſhed by another, the unmerciful man payed home in his own coin, by ſuch as ſhall ſhew as little mercy to him, or his. 3. How the proud and inſolent who do moſt hunt after outward glory, are uſually tryſted with ſome humbling abaſing ſtroke, he powreth contempt on princes, and ſuch who will not honour God ſhall not enjoy that honour they ſeek from men. 4. That ſuch who have been moſt given up to uncleanneſs are oft ſeen not to encreaſe as to their poſterity, but their iſſue obſervably made to fail, yea, by a divine hand rooted out, ſure many ſuch ſignal examples might be inſtanced. 5. How ſuch who have choſen ſin to ſhun trouble and ſuffering, have in their ſinful way got as large a meaſure thereof, as that man who in Q. *Mary*'s-time ſaid, he could not burn for the truth, and therefore forſook it, by an unſeen hand had both, himſelf and his houſe in one night burnt. 6. That the treacherous and deceitful men are thus dealt with by others, yea children who have been undutiful to their parents, have from theirs met with the ſame recom-

pence. 7. That whilſt men to make a purchaſe have even denyed themſelves the neceſſary uſe of outward things, are oft ſeen to leave their eſtate to ſuch who do quickly waſt and ſcatter the ſame, and thus the ſinful parſimony of parents puniſhed with the prodigality of ſuch who ſucceed them. 8. That the frequent uſe of ſome dreadful imprecations is oft puniſhed by the Lord with a ſuitable ſtroke to the conviction both of themſelves and others. 9. How ſuch as have joyned together, and united themſelves againſt the truth have been viſibly broken as to their own private intereſt, and truly we muſt ſay there are oft ſuch very convincing circumſtances, in ſome acts of the judgment of God, with ſuch a reſemblance to the ſin, yea, judgment ſometime purſuing men in the very place, where the ſin hath been acted that it may be eaſy for all who go by to ſay, there is indeed a God who judgeth in the earth.

IV. Doth it not appear, how very convincing and obvious this truth is even to the world, from thoſe ordinary remarks, and proverbial ſayings which we find in all ages, and in every part of the earth, even the moſt rude and ignorant have had, of the judgment of God; for truly what elſe are theſe but an expreſs witneſs, how univerſally this truth is known and received by men, how much the world is convinced thereof, through a long tract of obſervation from the fathers to the children, yea, thence they have had a divinity of their own, drawn out thereof, how ſuch ſins do not uſe to paſs without ſome publick puniſhment. Now, I would but name ſome few of thoſe remarks, that have been moſt uſual in all times. 1. How ſome families have not thriven, but a ſecret judgment hath been diſcernible thereon ſince they had hand in ſome groſs acts of wickedneſs, ſuch as bloodſhed, their former proſperity from ſuch a day viſibly declining. 2. How that an evil purchaſe uſeth not to be of long continuance, but their eſtate oft in a very ſtrange and unſenſible way made to evaniſh, which their children though frugal can by no means keep up, and the cauſe hereof, men do eaſily point at; it was purchaſed by fraud tranſmitted with a curſe cleaving thereto, and ſo there was no warding off the judgment of God. 3. Such who do not much conſider God's controverſy, yet are oft forced to remark that ſince ſome have medled or matched with ſuch an houſe, they have ſadly ſmarted thereby, ſomething of a curſe even following the race and poſterity of ſome. 4 How ſacrilegious medling with that which hath been for a pious and publick uſe hath cauſed a viſible waſt and conſumption in their own eſtate. 5. That mens asking counſel from the Devil, and turning to that way for their help, doth uſually reſolve in a ſad and tragical cloſe, and truly this much many in the ſhutting up of their life have been forced to confeſs. 6. That falſhood doth not uſe to keep its feet, nor a wicked way long proſper, whatever it ſeem to the firſt view, yea, I may add as one of the world's remarks which they cannot well ſhun, that which ſeemeth was an ordinary ſaying in the time of *Eſther*, *that it is not ſafe troubling the church, or for men to ſtate themſelves in oppoſition to that party*, and I dare not queſtion, but this ſhall be yet as convincing and obvious to the world as it hath been in any former ages.

V. Is not the appearance of a divine hand oft very obvious to the world in the diſcovery of ſin, and bringing to light ſome groſs acts of wickedneſs, even in an extraordinary way, while it is ſeen. 1. By what ſtrange unexpected means, theſe have been brought forth, ſuch an aſtoniſhing concurrence of things therein as hath forced not only beholders, to ſome ſpecial remark, but hath even ſtruck the guilty party through the heart with wonder, and conviction of the ſame. 2. How the hand of juſtice purſuing men for ſome publick and known crime, doth oft bring to light ſome that have been moſt ſecret, which they thought the world could never reach, yea, it may be frequent-

frequently ſeen while men have been in one ſin found out, it hath alſo brought forth the diſcovery of ſome other, and forced them to confeſs, that it was a righteous judgment purſuing them for the ſame. It is a thing alſo known, yea, by many undeniable inſtances witneſſed, that marvelous diſcovery of concealed murther, by the bleeding of the body upon the touch of the murtherer. I confeſs it ſhould be hard to aſſert the lawful and warrantable practice of ſuch an appeal to ſo extraordinary and ſtupendious a ſign from the Lord, where ſcripture goeth not clearly before us, but on the other hand, ſuch a thing ſo ſurely tryed for ſuch an end, and in the caſe where all ordinary means of diſcovery have been wanting, I think calleth us to a ſerious remark thereof, while it ſo viſibly ſeemeth to witneſs his hand, who doth make inquiſition for blood.

VI. Is not the dreadful conſternation, thoſe tormenting fears which men after ſome groſs acts of wickedneſs do betray, a very obvious witneſs to this truth, that there is a God who judgeth on the earth, in whoſe hands it is a terrible thing to fall; and ſheweth how great a puniſhment wickedneſs is to it ſelf, truly if atheiſts turn not brutiſh and ſtupid, they muſt notice this, and confeſs a thing which doth ſo oft reach their ears, what have been the horrid cries of many dying men who have moſt ſported with ſin in their life; that may tell byſtanders there is a judge who can ſtretch forth his hand on the ſoul and conſcience, whereto no rack, or outward torments are any way comparable.

VII. I would further add theſe extraordinary ſigns, and prodigies which do uſually go before ſome ſtroke and judgment on a land, do they not clearly point at a divine hand in the ſame? For as theſe are a ſolemn forewarning from heaven to give men an alarm, before remarkable changes, the truth whereof the world cannot deny, ſo we muſt ſay they are a convincing teſtimony, that theſe judgments are no caſual things, which the atheiſt cannot anſwer, it being ſo clear. 1. That ſuch ſigns and prodigies have been in every age viſible to the world's experience, and the graveſt hiſtories both of ancient and later times, do fully witneſs. 2. That ſuch things ſhould alſo be previous to great revolutions in the world, we know the ſcripture is moſt expreſs, *Joel* ii. 30. *Luke* xxi. 11. And as we ſhould guard againſt any ſuperſtitious reſpect, we ſhould alſo beware of ſtupid atheiſtical inadvertency at theſe ſtrange works of the Lord, which call both for fear and obſervation. 3. That ſuch have been uſually previous to great calamities and judgments on a people, is a thing that all ages muſt witneſs, even theſe, who have been moſt cautious and diſcerning in their time, who could not ſhun this as remark, *Herodotus* doth ſet that down as a thing moſt ſure in his vi. book, *Cum Deus puniturus eſt gentem, urbem, prodigiis id ſolet ſignificare*, and *Lucan* could tell, what went before the *Romans* civil-wars,-------*Superique minaces, prodigiis terras implerunt*, yea, it can hardly be inſtanced any great change, or revolution in the earth, which hath not had ſome ſuch extraordinary herald going before. 4. Can the world deny how ſometimes theſe prodigious ſigns have been ſhaped out to point at the very nature of the ſtroke then eminent, by a ſtrange reſemblance to the ſame, ſuch as a flaming ſword in their air, the appearance of armies fighting even ſometimes upon the earth, to the view of many, moſt ſober and judicious ſpectators; alſo ſhowers of blood, the noiſe of drums and ſuch like, which are known uſually to go before war and commotions.

IX. *That there are evil ſpirits. Eph.* vi. 12. *Rev.* xx. 2, 3. and a diabolical power ſuch as the ſcripture hath held forth, whoſe conſtant work is the ruin and undoing of man, is a truth not only witneſſed from that experience

perience christians have of their assaults, but is undeniable by the world and greatest atheists, except they deny the discovery of sense as well as reason.

I confess it may cause fear and astonishment to think on this, that spirits so knowing, and once originally excellent, have fallen thus into such an height of indignation against infinite goodness, that it is now their only aim and pleasure to dishonour God, and destroy his image in man. It should indeed cause us to fear him that spared not the angels who sinned. But the truth it self is sure, that such a party is at this day encompassing the earth, and trafficking up and down there, to prove which by arguments were to light a candle to let men see that it is day, while it is known, what ordinary familiar converse many have therewith, and alas! too easy to discern that power which the prince of this world hath upon the children of disobedience, how obvious are the marks of his conquest almost every where? Thousands lying in his chains, how far do we see many transformed even to the very image of the Devil, which in those desperate prodigious acts of wickedness that are oft in the world may appear, such whereat we should think human nature, tho' corrupt could not but tremble, yea, look on with horror, how many in all ages have even been in an express covenant with them, and is not there a great part of the earth where the Devil is visibly and audibly known where he hath a kind of neighbourhood with men? But there being no need for such a demonstration, I only here aim to hold forth what a concerning truth this is, and of great consequence if seriously considered, yea, how both the scripture and christian religion, is hereby evidently confirmed since these things must necessarily follow.

1. That in this the scripture is truly fulfilled which doth witness what these spirits are, adversaries to man in their nature, and inclination desperately evil, whose actings in the earth have a visible tendency to mens hurt and ruin, yea, their pretended favours, always directed to that end, whence we see such a natural inbred horror which is in man against them. 2. That it is no common thing which they so much pursue, something more precious than the body for which so great and cruel an adversary is in continual labour, for their actings have no such tendency to ruin mens estate in the world; no, it is most evident this is the soul, the immortal soul, to undo them in that great interest, which is the mark whereat they level, that poor man might be sharer of that misery under which they are concluded. 3. Is it not an undeniable consequence of this truth that there must be an invisible world that hath inhabitants of another kind than such as are here, that sure there is some being above man, yea, a real correspondence betwixt men and spirits, and should not man thus placed in a middle estate betwixt the angels and the beasts here below partaking in his body with the one, but in his reasonable soul with the other thence raise himself to thoughts of some more excellent condition for which he is framed, than a sensual life, and that surely the soul hath an interest in an other world which he should most look after? 4. Must not this also be sure that there is an invisible guard, and these desperate spirits are under restraint by a power stronger than they, which can bound their malice, for this may be certain that these who have so great enmity to man, are so near, and have such advantages over us could not keep at such a distance, but that they are kept in chains by a higher power. 5. How is it that now by the gospel and within this precinct of the church, Satan's power is so much restrained in respect of former times, while it is known what a familiar converse they had with men, did even haunt their houses, and were so publick in their appearance under such names of *Fairies* and *Brownies*, which since the breaking up of the light of the gospel hath not been, yea, hath not the

Devil

Devil to this day an open throne and dominion in these parts of the earth where Christ is not worshipped; it is also known, how the oracles of old did cease, and that publick worship which the world for many ages had given them, with the very time of Christ's appearance, and spreading of the gospel these night beasts getting to their dens, when once the day was broke up. *Plutarch* and other heathen writers are a witness to this. 5. Whence is it that within the church where satan is more restrained, yet there he doth more stir than in all the world besides? Doth it not shew that that is the party with which he is at war, hence doth he more rage, the more clear the light shineth, yea, is there not something, besides mens natural enmity at the truth, even a fury and violence wherewith some are visibly driven in their actings with such an unsatiable cruelty against the followers of Christ, without the least shadow of provocation as holds forth a lively resemblance of the Devil, and some violent pressure, and incitement from that corner. 7. Is it not sure that there is such a party, by this, that he is an adversary to God and holiness, for which he doth so impetuously tempt, and press men to the outward acts of sin, yea, that there is a spirit of blasphemy which so visibly rageth in the world, and acts men to war against heaven with their tongues by cursing, and blasphemous oaths which hath no carnal pleasure or gain, but yet, can not forbear, from a violent incitement which may be seen swaying them to the same. 8. Whence is it which is so very well known and publick that these horrid wretches, who give themselves to the Devil cannot enter in any formal engagement without renouncing Christ and their baptism, doth it not shew that direct opposition he stands in to Christ, yea, to the very name and shadow of christianity? 9. Whence is it that even the greatest atheists upon any appearance of the Devil, or apprehension from that corner, will not then make scorn of prayer, but turns in earnest to that, which at other times they mocked at. O doth it not shew mens atheism is their judgment, that not only there is a dreadful horror and fear, which by nature men have of these evil spirits, but some inbred sense also, and impression of a deity, which doth bewray it self whether they will or not, in a pressing strait and extremity.

X. *That there is such an enmity betwixt the seed of the woman, and the serpent* as the scripture hath held forth is very manifest, a truth wherein the world may see the scripture clearly verifyed, *Gal.* iv. 29.

It is truly strange that this putteth not men to more serious thoughts, to pursue such a thing to its true rise, what should cause such a violent and unreasonable contrariety against the way, and followers of God; for here upon grave reflections they must needs see that their way in this is a convincing witness to the truth of the scripture, which might put them in some other humour, yea, help to turn this poison into an antidote against it self, but this is sure and undeniable, the discovery whereof cannot but stare the greatest atheist in the face, from these convincing evidences.

1. That it is seen no private quarrel which ever was among men hath been with such vigour and malice pursued as this upon the account of religion, which hath still put the world more into a flame, than any private interest, yea, it is very manifest how men are carried with the spirit of their own natural inclination, to oppose the church and people of God. 2. That this feud and enmity could never be taken away through all the successions of time, a strife which is not lately begun, to be seen only in one age, betwixt the children of the bond woman, and of the free, no, the most sage and wise amongst men the greatest peace-makers, could yet never fall on a way to reconcile these two parties, but the children have still served themselves heirs to the quarrel, and hatred of their fathers against the church. 3. Is

it not ſeen that theſe who are more civil, and can hold a little up with the form of religion, yet, will break forth in greateſt rage againſt the power thereof, when once it begins to appear? It is indeed here, that inbred contrariety which is in men againſt holineſs, doth bewray it ſelf, even in thoſe who are otherways noted for a calm and peaceable diſpoſition, while once they begin to be ſcorcht with its heat. 4. What ſtrong natural antipathy is this which cauſeth men to purſue with much bitterneſs theſe from whom they never had any perſonal injury? ſure their conſcience muſt oft tell that they have no reaſon, or any other provocation than what is from the appearance of the image of God in ſuch, but this is their nature and diſpoſition, an enmity which they can no more help, than they can change their nature, or the *Leopard* can change its ſpots. 5. From what a ſtrong inclination and inward principle doth the world thus act in its oppoſition to the church and followers of God? whilſt it is clear, though theſe were never ſo quiet and peaceable, yet their enemies are ſtill reſtleſs, and cannot ſleep beſide them. 6. It is ſeen how this doth ſeparate betwixt neareſt friends and relations, and alienate ſuch who have ſometimes been moſt dear to one another, no bond in nature ſo ſtrait which it will not break, it doth oft ſet the husband againſt the wife and the parents againſt the children, yea, when religion once breaks up in a corner of a land or family, doth it then make a viſible jarr, and put all in a flame? 7. It is clear that when once grace appeareth in men they are as a ſign and wonder to a prophane generation, the world doth then viſibly change her countenance, and looketh like a ſtep-mother; while on the other hand it is clear that profeſſors turning looſe and running to that exceſs of riot with others, will cauſe their old adverſaries warm towards them, and alaſs, proveth the ſureſt way to gain mens friendſhip while the world thinks, they are their own when once they turn prophane.

XI. *That the creature is made ſubject to vanity becauſe of ſin,* which not only the wiſeſt of men but the ſpirit of God doth witneſs, that things here beneath the ſun, are indeed *vanity and vexation of ſpirit, Rom.* viii. 20. *Eccleſ.* ii. 11. is a piece of the ſcripture in ſuch great letters written forth to the view of men, that none can be ſtrangers thereto.

It is true, the cauſe and ſolid remedy of this ſo general a complaint, is only reached by the godly man, who knoweth how to read the vanity of the creature, as a part of the fulfilling of the word, and doth ſeriouſly conſider things as they are, and not as they appear, but it is alſo ſure, that in every age through the various changes of man's life this is ſo clearly witneſſed, that the moſt groſs and brutiſh, cannot ſhift the conviction thereof, but in one of theſe two times have been forced to a publick acknowledging of the ſame at death, when they are leaving the world, or in a day of ſtrait when the world is leaving them, now to demonſtrate this I ſhall here offer theſe few queries.

1. Have not the greateſt inſtances of the glory of the world, been uſually the greateſt examples of its vanity and change? How few hath ambition raiſed, but it hath alſo ruined, yea, given the foreſt fall to theſe it had lifted moſt high? What ſudden changes do attend great men, and high places, which thoſe who ſit low do eſcape, ſure if the tragedies of princes, and ſuch who in their condition have been raiſed above others were put by themſelves in record, it ſhould make a great volume, and ſhew how their glory and proſperous eſtate did only make their fall more obſervable. 2. Is it not obvious what a frail dying diſpoſition is in all worldly things, that even the greateſt kingdoms, and politick bodies, to maintain which neither policy nor ſtrength was wanting, yet like natural bodies of men had their inevitable periods,

riods, their youth and flouriſhing times, their declining, and old age, and at laſt even brought to their grave; hath not the glory of greateſt empires and monarchies ſunk in the duſt? yea, ſcarce a heap of ſtones left this day to tell us where once famous cities have ſtood, *Nunc ſeges eſt ubi Troja fuit*, the ruins whereof, and ſuch excellent pieces of the world doth clearly ſhew that certain diſſolution of the whole fabrick at laſt. 3. What a ſmall diſtance we may ſee betwixt extremities in outward things, even greateſt plenty, and poverty, the higheſt place, and a low condition, ſo that the morning hath ſeen ſome happy and flouriſhing in the world, whom the evening hath ſeen miſerable, and in a moſt ſhort time, ſuch who have been objects of envy, and admiration, made the object of mens contempt and pity, yea, have ſo ſuddenly diſappeared, have ſunk into ſo little bounds, that men have been put narrowly to conſider them, and with admiration ask, are theſe they who were once a terror in the land of the living, and their place hath not been found, who a few days before ſeemed to place themſelves alone in the midſt of the earth? 4. What elſe is it but the very preſent moment of time that maketh ſuch a difference betwixt the rich and the poor, and as to what is paſt, and the by-gone time mens happineſs and miſery may be reckoned as though it had never been, *Nam quicquid retro eſt, mors tenet*, and who but a fool would boaſt of that which is to come, a thing ſo uncertain? this only is ſure that a few days will make all conditions equal, when the bones of the rich, and the duſt of greateſt princes will not be diſcernible from theſe of the poor man. 5. Is there any thing ſo pleaſant which hath not a worm at the root thereof, a moth which naturally breeds in the moſt ſatisfying enjoyments that quickly eats out the heart thereof, and blaſts their hope before the harveſt? How oft is greateſt longing in the purſuit of things turned to loathing, and wearineſs when obtained, becauſe it is not the nature of the thing ſo much as an humor, and the novelty thereof that maketh them pleaſant, hence many ſenſual men have turned *monaſtick*, and greateſt *monarchs* become melancholy, yea, how uſual is it for many to ſurvive their pleaſures, and bury their joy and delights in the world even before themſelves, while nothing remains of all their former enjoyments but ſome ſad ſighs and groans with a heavy fair well. 6. Is it not found that riches, and abundance of the earth doth load more than it fills, and mens wealth only further heighten their wants? How very poor are ſome amidſt their fulneſs, more than theſe who earn their bread with ſore labour, whom the world doth wholly poſſeſs, while they do not at all poſſeſs it, neither is it in their power to make uſe of that they have, yea, are they not ſick and die in princes courts, as well as in the meaneſt cottage, and the complaints of the great and rich, uſually more than theſe of the poor? ſure it is known that the great man doth oftner want a ſtomack, and reſt, than the poor want meat and a bed to lye on. 7. In what an endleſs circle do voluptuous men move, from one thing to another, in a perpetual ſearch after other enjoyments to ſatisfy their ſpirits? which ſhew what a great want is there, which ſtill calls for variety of things, and ſome freſh ſupply, to take off the wickedneſs of one pleaſure by another, elſe the delight they have therein would quickly languiſh and wear out; yea is it not ſtill found that the beſt of outward things are not on a near approach what they ſeemed to be at a diſtance, the eye not ſatisfyed with ſeeing, nor the ear with hearing, but the more they are preſſed the leſs they yield, neither do they enjoy ſuch things with moſt ſatisfaction who take a full draught, who wallow and ſteep themſelves in their enjoyments, being more in expectation than in poſſeſſion, ſo that ſometime mens attaining their deſire hath cauſed their delight and pleaſure in theſe things ceaſe. 8. It is alſo clear that outward things are

incident to the worſt without making them the better, and ſeparable from the beſt without making them the worſe, and what can ſilver or gold ſute an immortal ſoul, or anſwer ſuch a capacity, more than virtue, and godlineſs could anſwer to fill an empty cheſt, or glaſs bottle? 9. How rare is it for men to get their lot in the world brought up to their deſire? but are ſtill at ſome jar with their preſent condition, ſo that oft there needs no more to turn men diſcontent, but the thought of ſome lot, which they apprehend more ſatisfying than their own, the want whereof turns them more diſquiet than all their enjoyments are pleaſing, yea, it is alſo evident many mens labour and diſquiet doth increaſe with their wealth, and turns the flame more violent, and that even in the condition of the poor there is ſomething the great man is made to envy, while the poor may find cauſe oft-times to pity, and compaſſionate ſome great men in the midſt of their proſperous eſtate. 10. What is the enjoying the beſt of the earth, but its very paſſing away, while it periſheth in the preſent uſe? And what? Are not men going through the world and leaving it behind them in the midſt of their moſt ſatisfying enjoyments? is not excellency of moſt outward things only according to opinion, or the inſtitution of men while they have but ſmall intrinſick worth from their own quality; in ſome parts of the earth whitneſs is reckoned deformity, and the blackeſt colour the greateſt beauty, and therefore they paint the *Devil white?* what a poor ſmoke is ſwelling titles of honour if rightly weighed? while the proud man's happineſs doth ſome way hang upon the poor who go by, which they muſt beg from others with the greateſt artifice, and would the choiceſt jewels, or a bag of gold laid upon the heart of a dying man, any way quiet his ſpirit, or eaſe his pain? *Surely this is vanity.* 11. Is it not oft ſeen amidſt the various changes of the earth, princes and great men walking on foot, and ſervants riding on horſeback, the children oft put to ask an alms from ſuch who have ſerved their fathers? fools loaded with wealth, and great titles, while men of the choiceſt ſpirit, are buried under contempt and poverty, yea do we not ſee how quickly men are exalted and abaſed in the world? That which in one age is razſed, is oft razed in another, yea, many at much labour to undo that which others have done with the greateſt care, and expence, what a ſore vanity is this? 12. Will not the want of a very ſmall thing oft embitter the pleaſanteſt lot, and turn it into wormwood and gall? the ſmalleſt touch of pain, the gravel, or tooth-ache, yea, even ſome melancholy thought will make men diſreliſh all their preſent enjoyments, what torment doth a ſmall ruffle and affront oft prove to the proud man even in the midſt of his glory? is it not alſo found, how carnal mirth, and joy, men wallowing in the delights of the world, hath ſtill in the cloſe a bitter ſting and harſh reliſh, which as the ſhadow attends the body is the native, and unſeparable conſequent thereof, and ſurely that may be eaſy to diſcern, there is no condition, which can want a croſs or ſome mixture of diſcontent, even where there is leaſt cauſe ſeen.

I would add which cannot want a remark in every time, that while men ſeem to be at the top, and furtheſt period of their thoughts and projects, have things according to their deſire brought to ſome happy cloſe, they are oft then upon ſome turn, and change in their condition, either by death or ſome vety ſad croſs, and even in that day their thoughts have periſhed, truly ſuch as are wiſe obſervers of the world, and of the courſe of things therein may oft ſee, how uſual a tryſt this is, that when there is too bright a ſunblink in outward proſperity, if great ſobriety and moderation do not accompany the ſame, it is an ominous, and fatal preſage of a ſtorm, and *Ad ſummum quicquid venit, ad exitum prope eſt.*

XII.

XII. There is this truth, which hath in all ages been clearly witneſſed, even to the conviction of the world, *That the end of the upright man is peace*, and integrity, whatever rub it may ſeem to have by the way, yet, hath a ſweet and comfortable cloſe, *Pſal.* xxxvii. 37. This is an undeniable truth, not only becauſe the ſaints are then entring into perfect peace, but it is alſo clear that however the godly man may have very ſharp aſſaults in the cloſe of his days, and ſome who have ſhined very bright do ſet in a dark cloud, their evening full of ſorrow, and bitterneſs, yea, their reflection on ſome ſad ſlip which they have made by the way, bearing them company even to the grave, yet this truth is ſtill verifyed, yea, may be diſcernible to the conviction of beholders, that integrity, and an upright walk hath much peace in the end, and doth land men upon a comfortable harbour, concerning which I can appeal to the world, and the moſt ordinary onlookers, if this hath not been oft very convincing, and diſcernible to them, from many inſtances of the Lord's uſual way with thoſe who have been faithful in their generation at their death, from that teſtimony which they have then given this, yea, from moſt viſible ſigns and evidences hereof even upon their countenance and carriage, whilſt it is ſeen.

1. How great an advantage ſuch uſe to have above others, when death approacheth, ſo that it hath not been *Balaam*'s wiſh alone *to die the death of the righteous and to have his latter end like theirs*, but the worſt of men are ſtill forced to witneſs their reſpect to the lot of a dying chriſtian, and would wiſh a ſhare thereof when it comes to their turn, concerning which I may ask the greateſt mockers at religion, and at the life of a godly man, if they can poſſibly ſhun this conviction, that ſurely ſuch are of the beſt eſtate, and at the greateſt advantage in their end. 2. This I am ſure cannot be hid from the world what abundant peace the ſaints do then teſtify in their choice, what a preſent unſpeakable complacency they have with this that they valued Chriſt above all other advantages, did chooſe affliction rather than ſin, and now while they are ſtepping into eternity, find the witneſs of a good conſcience, and of God's approbation ſo ſweet a feaſt, that their joy and peace on this account, they cannot ſmother or keep in, but declare to all who ſtand by what they find, and truly it hath been oft ſeen, how the inward joy which ſome of theſe have had hath exceeded their outward pain, been more ſenſible to them than their ſickneſs, yea, have been in leaving the world much more chearful than theſe whom they left behind. 3. It is alſo known, and may be very obvious to by-ſtanders, how with a ſweet compoſure and recumbency of ſoul ſuch have laid themſelves upon the promiſe, in that hour, while they were grapling with the king of terrors, their ſpirit then quiet and calm, having taken the truth, and teſtimony of God for their ſhield and buckler, which may tell the world what another kind of ſecurity, and confidence theſe have beyond others, yea, that ſurely the ground on which this confidence is founded, muſt be a thing that is able to bear out the greateſt ſtorm and aſſault, and is ſomething above nature. 4. Is it not clear that even an untimely and violent death, could not let or fruſtrate that peace which integrity cauſeth in the cloſe? For innumerable inſtances can witneſs what marvelous joy and ſatisfaction the ſaints have ſhewed at a ſtake, and upon a ſcaffold, and thence have had a more chearful going out of time, than the rich man ſtretched upon his ſoft bed, or the greateſt monarch, amidſt all outward advantages; ſure we muſt ſay that ſweet refreſhing cloſe of the upright man, hath never been more viſible, and writ in greater letters, than in ſuch a caſe. 5. What very ſad conflicts have ſome of the ſaints had in their life, yea, even upon the ſetting of the ſun have been put to cry out through ſore perplexing fears, and

doubts wherewith they have been assaulted, who have at last had this turned into a song, and such a marvelous change in their case, as hath not been more sensible to themselves, than discernible to all on-lookers, like a sudden calm, and sun-shine, after some dark storm. I must here ask the atheist, and such as reckon godliness but a fancy whence should so strange, so sudden, and great alteration proceed, that these who a little before were under such horror, could have no rest, no arguments could do their turn, do thus witness the abundant peace of their souls, yea, which is oft seen that fervent desire wherewith some of the saints are taken away, the very lustre of heaven being upon their countenance, how marvelous and piercing are their words, which may clearly tell that now they feel, they see, and have got some glance of that, which on-lookers cannot reach, though they cannot deny an acknowledgment of this. 6. Must not the world grant, yea, the greatest enemies to godliness allow this charity, that sure this peace and joy which such have witnessed at death can be no counterfeit, that there is no temptation could thus byas them to deceive others and themselves in a matter of such high concernment, and at a time when it is expected the grossest of men would speak truth, yea, that this doth appear, while men cannot in the least charge the dying christian with any distemper in his judgment, but while they have been most composed, stayed, and present in mind, and as to other things of their concernment, most deliberate and sober; even then they have born this witness.

(¶) Since that peace and joy, which integrity hath in the close of the day, when the saints are dying is undeniable, even to the conviction of the world, I would add something concerning that great truth, *The immortality of the soul, and its subsisting after death*, to which this joy, when the christian is finishing his course hath a special respect, and is a truth, wherein the scriptures accomplishment, and the certainty of that blessed record, may be convincingly witnessed, and demonstrated to the world, for it is thus, (I mean by the light of the scripture) that life and immortality is brought to light, and made known to the sons of men. I know this seems so common and uncontroverted a thing *An after-being of the soul*, and *its eternal subsistence*, that to say more, than the naming of it may be looked on as impertinent; but oh, how unknown a truth is it! of which here needs no more to shew the little solid persuasion men have, but that it is so usually past with so few, and these very common thoughts; it is not indeed much questioned, not because it is believed, and men are sure thereof, but because they are not in earnest about such a thing; it concerns the world to keep at a distance from a through knowing of that, which would be their torment to know; and there is cause for this sad regrate within the church, that the most great and fundamental truths wherein our comfort is most concerned, are usually least studied; but O should it not put us to other thoughts if we could have a serious view of this; it may truly be said the better part is so buried in the worst part, that until men are dying, few lay this to heart, that their souls must live for ever, yea, must once part fellowship with the body, and enter in another world, and an unknown state until the resurrection; what I intend here, is only a short touch at this great truth as it is a convincing witness to the scripture and the accomplishment thereof; concerning which I would offer these three things to be considered. 1. How express and clear a testimony the scripture gives to this. 2. On what plain and undeniable grounds of reason this truth is demonstrable to the world. 3. How great a thing it is to believe and be assuredly persuaded thereof; for it seems men rather dream than have their judgments seriously exercised, or are in earnest about such a thing.

As to the first, It is undeniable that not only the scripture holds this forth,

but that there only men have a clear and right discovery of it, it is indeed known, what glances the world hath had of this, yea, what hath been writ thereon, by some whose sole guide was the light of nature in this search; but it is no less evident, how very dark and uncertain these have been; they could not shift some conviction thereof, but it was through a dark cloud, and as some pleasant dream, they looked thereon; because they did not know its rise and original; and what the end was to which in its actings, it ought to be directed; they knew not what its after-condition could truly mean, thence with such wavering and uncertainty do they express their thoughts, I do not here mean the schools of *Epicurus* only, to whom the soul was but a complection of atoms, but ye see how perplexed and uncertain both *Aristotle* and others of these famous ancients have shewed themselves in this, which speaks out some more perplexed and disordered notion, which they could not ward off, than any clear and certain discovery which they had on solid grounds thereof, for they knew not the scripture, *where its original, whence it is*; and *whether it must return*, are so clearly held forth, *Eccles.* xii. 7. And you may further see, *Heb.* xii. 9. *Gen.* ii. 7. *Luk.* xvi. 22, 23. 1 *Pet.* iii. 9.

II. This grave testimony which the scripture of God does bear to such a truth, may be also held forth to the world from such a clear and rational demonstration, that the most brutish of men can hardly sink so far into the condition of a beast, as to deny they have a never-dying soul, which will not go to the dust or inherit corruption with the body; I should be loath to borrow so much of your time, by any discourse, for which there are many, many arguments, unanswerably demonstrative of this truth, both physical and moral; yet having mentioned it I cannot altogether pass the same without a touch at some few things that may be most convincing and obvious. 1. If you should question the being and subsistence of the soul after death, you must also deny its frame, that it is a simple immaterial and active substance, which hath neither quantity or parts, and is not compounded of any principles, and therefore can be resolv'd to none. 2. Do but consider, if the soul have no cause of corruption, and from no contraries can suffer opposition, as the body does, through the prevalency of heat or cold, how should it then admit of a dissolution with the body; for you know generation and corruption they are by contraries, and if you argue from any natural cause it must surely be one of two, which makes the soul partake with the body, in its decay and mouldering down; either a dependency on matter, as the soul of the beast hath, which is but a material form, or a conflict from contrary qualities, which you know helps the bodies wasting and its fall; but I think you in so far contradict reason to alledge any of these in the soul of man. 3. Consider if by these diseases, to which the body is subject, the soul is not reached, must it not also have a distinct existence from it, and I am sure you must grant the soul doth not directly suffer from any outward diseases, but the body may be under unexpressible pain and anguish when there is a sweet calm and serenity within. 4. Does not this witness that the soul lies not a dying with the body, nor falls with it since it suffers no decrease, but is found strong and vigorous in its actings when the flesh is brought low, and on a visible decay, yea, is it not at the greatest advantage in its exercise and discerning, the more separate from the body, and sensible things, now it is sure that cannot be destructive to the soul in its being, which is so subservient to it in its operation, I think these who ever observed the joy and peace of a dying christian and the excellent frame and composure of their soul, under a pained and languishing body, through many diseases, *may clearly see this truth, and there read a lecture of the immorta-*

immortality of the soul. 5. Will you consider, can the soul of man have a dependence on the body in its being, when it does no way depend thereon in its acting and exercise; for it is sure it does truly act, yea, hath a clear ratiocination even when the body sleeps, and O does it not prove that this soul, that is found waking when the other is asleep, must have a distinct subsistence, and live when it dies. 6. If you admit that there are spirits and incorporal beings, which do act without a body, and yet have a true and real subsistence can you doubt or question, the existence of the soul, or its exerting the faculties thereof without the body, though you do not reach how this should be; and if there be indeed a converse and intercourse betwixt us and spiritual beings, yea, a truth in *fellowship with God the Father of spirits*, O may not this satisfyingly demonstrate that existence and acting of the soul, even when the body is at a distance and in the grave. 7. Consider, that which you must grant hath a dominion and præeminence over the body, by its making a rational choice of good, when it is most cross to the desire and delight of the flesh, yea, cannot only determine it to endure most grievous torments, but does oft witness a special delectation therein, must it not be something truly distinct from the body which can have a subsistence without it? Now this I am sure you will not deny, that there is such a dominion over the flesh, and a captivating of it to the law of the mind, which the most sensual and brutish will not deny in many instances how little acquaintance soever they have with it themselves. 8. Since there is a discovery and knowledge of things, not only above the reach and impressions of sense, but even contrary thereto, that men do rationally judge and assent to truths which truly contradicts their senses, as the rotundity of the earth, which seems to us a plain, *&c.* O does it not shew this soul in man, which can so far soar above the earth, and does so far exceed the body, must be of a more excellent mould, and something truly different from it? I shall but add what means that war and strugling, which to every christian is known, betwixt him and his natural conscience, what means these reflect acts of the soul on its self, these marvelous products of the understanding, and new discoveries? why are men so anxious and concern'd about their surviving name, which is a most poor airy accident not worth the regarding, if there were a destruction of the whole? what means that marvelous deportment of so many *martyrs* for the truth that they should shew such a joy and satisfaction amidst their torments, as tho' they had no bodies, the pleasure of the soul so far overcoming the pain of the flesh? what means so universal a consent to this truth, that these who hate and fear it, yet cannot be rid thereof? and I must also ask, how are the choice and the excellent of the earth so oft crush'd, under the feet of their oppressors, whilst these wretches do oft wallow in all satisfying outward delights, yea, sometimes go hence without bands in their death, in a word, O what is it that makes so vast a difference betwixt men and beasts, since these you see have a sensual life, want not some natural sagacity, and have their enjoyments by the senses as well as man.

III. Let us consider how great and astonishing a truth this is; *O immortality do men believe it?* The souls surviving the body, and that condition wherein it will enter, and yet have so few thoughts thereof, for this is a matter of such concernment, that may turn much of our life to a continued wondering; I must say can this be believed, our having an immortal soul, which is of a more excellent nature, and inestimable value than these visible heavens, sun moon and stars, for which no less than the blood of him who was truly God could ransome from everlasting wrath, and yet we put so small a price thereon; is it indeed believed by men whilst they are so hot in their

pursuit

purſuit after the world, ſince here is a queſtion may ſilence all fleſh, *what ſhould it avail a man to gain, were it the whole world, when it is purchaſed with the loſing of the ſoul*; it is ſure there is no imaginable proportion betwixt that and a piece of red earth, or betwixt a few years of time and long eternity; I remember a paſſage of worthy Mr. *Blair* our own country-man, who, the firſt time he heard Mr. *Bruce* preach, ſaid, 'The fame of ſo great 'a man cauſed him to expect ſomething very extraordinary from him; but 'his whole ſermon did preſs this truth of the ſoul's being immortal, and that it 'was a great thing to believe it; he confeſſed it did at firſt ſomeway amuſe him, 'why he dwelt ſo much upon ſo known and common a ſubject; but after he 'found it was ſome other thing than appears at the firſt look, for which men 'may diſpute and toſs it as a notion in the ſchools, who never knew what it 'was to believe the truth thereof; and that a ſerious impreſſion of it on the 'heart is ſomething elſe than a ſwiming in the head, by ſome ordinary ſpecu-'lation of this;' O what a truth, and what aſtoniſhment ſhould it cauſe if men would but ſometimes go alone and conſider. 1. What it is they have thus held out to them, and how great a change is before them, which ere many days muſt be in their condition, when once that ſtrange ſtep is paſſed, betwixt time and another world which they can ſtep but once. 2. That this marvelous change is truly near; time making long ſteps, the veſſel under full ſail, which carries foreward men whether they ſleep or wake to that port; for it is ſure this cannot be long deferred, and it is very unſure, but this night thy ſoul may be required. 3. *That this change muſt be in a moment, in the very twinkling of an eye*, and no interval, but a preſent entering of the ſoul into that after-ſtate, which ſhall then put the chriſtian in the fulneſs of an inconceiveable joy, in the immediate preſence of God, in the embracements of the *Mediator*, amongſt the angels, and ſpirits of the juſt made perfect; but one moment alſo muſt put othets out of their ſenſual pleaſures and delights, the prince off his throne, and theſe who have been wallowing in the world down to theſe dark and horrid priſons, where, with the ceaſing of this world's melody, they are forthwith met with that horrid noiſe and howling of the Devils and of all the company of the damned. 4. Oh! if men would conſider, what thoughts they ſhall then have in another world of that other world, and what other thoughts of their former ſtate and condition; how far they will find this beyond all they ever thought or conceived at a diſtance. 5. Should it not cauſe aſtoniſhment to think ſeriouſly on this great change, which admits no after change, but that there long eternity is the true meaſure of the ſouls duration after death; O what a long breathing word to be ever ever bleſſed or miſerable, where the one hath no fear and can go no more out, and the other no hope, or poſſibility thereof; the hope of the hireling is not there, that he may change his maſter at the next term, for theſe gates are everlaſtingly ſhut, by the decree of him who alters not.

Now to ſhut up this argument, I ſhall offer one inſtance more, wherein the world may ſee the truth of the ſcripture; and therewith of a divine providence convincingly demonſtrate, if prejudice did not draw a veil and obſtruct ſo excellent a diſcovery, it is this, *That the way of God is perfect*, Pſal. xviii 30. *and that his works are perfect, and his ways, judgment*, Deut. xxxii. 4. yea, *that he does all things well.* Mark vii. 37. which teſtimony then the multitude was forced to bear to this great truth, and O how great a truth is it! which can be ſaid neither of angels nor men, but to him hath a peculiar reſpect, even to him alone, in whoſe way there is nothing crooked, no miſtake no inequality, nothing too much or ſuperfluous, nothing out of due time that is either too ſoon, or too late, nothing incongruous, nothing miſplaced,

yea, in all he does nothing which is not beſt done, which any could rectify or make better, but in every piece of his work leaves matter of wonder behind, and thus declares himſelf to be God; I know this is a truth the world cannot well bear, but pretends a viſible contradiction from the great diſorder that things here ſeem to be in, for men will oppoſe to this, what a miſcarrying there is of inſtruments, what a ſtrange emergency there is of moſt grievous and croſs accidents, the moſt promiſing means frequently blaſted, yea, how good and evil is ſo ſtrangely interweaved, and is not the preſent day oft undoing the work and labour of the former; yet whatever the world can ſay to darken this great truth, *That the way of the Lord is abſolutely perfect*, it muſt ſhine; yea, it does not want clearneſs when by a thick interpoſition betwixt us and the ſame, there may be need of clearing it, the ſun ceaſes not to ſhine when the clouds obſtruct its brightneſs as to us, O that theſe who will debate ſo great a truth, would but come near, and ſeriouſly conſider the work of the Lord, then ſhould they ſee ſo much in the daily tract and adminiſtration of providence, yea, even in moſt ordinary paſſages thereof, that might arreſt their ſpirit with aſtoniſhment, the diſcovery whereof they ſhun by keeping at a diſtance from it.

I ſhall touch a little this demonſtration, how this piece of divine truth is verified and writ out in the event, to the obſervation of the world, that they who cannot ſpiritually diſcern the ſame, yet have ſo much witneſſed to dazle their eyes, and force this acknowledgement, that the way of the Lord is perfect, and he hath done all things well; and for clearing thereof, I would offer ſome particulars, though few, yet ſo very comprehenſive that in a large meaſure they reach not only theſe great works of God, wherein he moſt eminently declares himſelf about the church, but takes in alſo the moſt ordinary things of providence, here under the ſun, and therein demonſtrates the certainty of this truth. Firſt, you ſee this clearly verified, that *the way of the Lord is perfect, in the whole frame and ſtructure of the church of Chriſt here*, which is made a great wonder, and an aſtoniſhing piece of the work of God, beyond the moſt exquiſite human contrivance, that ever was; it is her true glory, that does moſt affect the eye, and raviſh the heart, it is within, and lies not in the common rod of mens obſervation, yea, ſome parts of this excellent body oftimes are in ſuch a diſorder, as darkens the beauty of the whole, there is ſuch an intermixture of the hay and ſtubble of human inventions, with this choice building, that helps to mar its order and beauty, the carved work alſo may be ſpoiled and broken down, as with axes and hammers; yet with all theſe diſadvantages, there is a glory on the church of Chriſt, an awful majeſty, ſuch convincing marks of its grandeur, even under its ruins, as have forced the world, and the great men thereof, to conſider that ſight with wonder and amazement, which you ſee, *Pſal.* xlviii. they ſaw, they marveled, and haſted away, and the preceeding words gives clear reaſon, for God was known in her palaces for a refuge they ſaw ſomething both in the grandeur and frame of the church, and in her preſervation, that forced them to ſee that it was ſomething more than human. Now to clear this a little, do but conſider theſe few inſtances, wherein you may ſee the great and ſtupendious fabrick of the church, and how all things are well ordered by him who hath framed it. 1. You may ſee on what a ſure foundation it is built, *even that of the* prophets and *apoſtles, which is the ſcripture of God*, whereon as it is manifeſtly founded, it is no leſs marvelouſly united and joyned together in *Jeſus Chriſt, who is the chief corner ſtone*; will you ſeriouſly conſider the ſame form of the houſe, and the faſhions thereof, its goings out and comings in, with all its ordinances, and there you may ſee

how

how marvelously exact and uniform this building is. 2. Is it not likewise obvious that the church thus fitly joined together and knit by all that the joynts do supply in its whole complex frame groweth up as a building to the Lord? Yea, is there not a very strait union and correspondence betwixt all the parts thereof in the same faith and worship, that though divided in so many parcels through the world, yet is still one intire body, the union whereof, the variety of members and these of such various sizes, that great inequality amongst them in their growth, the remoteness of place, different languages, exile or change of countries, yet cannot break off that near tie, that joins the church of Christ together. 3. What a wonderful contrivance is it which is in the world, yet not of it, that spreads it self among the nations, yet loseth not its own distinct being, is mixed with human societies, yet an inclosure and incorporation by her self; a fountain of sweet waters sealed, tho' surrounded with this great salt ocean of the world, is made up of many particular churches yet every part homogeneous and of the same nature with the whole, and though it seems to be open to sore assaults, yet is a defenced city, which is impaled, hath both her walls and watchmen, her bulwarks and strong towers. 4. This is of such a frame, that is both visible and invisible, yet not two distinct churches, though under diverse considerations it comprehends both without any jar, and hath communion with Jesus Christ as her head, for life, standing related to him as his mystical body, and yet as a visible politick body, is related also to him, as its supreme head, by a political government and guidance, and hath an express charter granted for its extents and rights. 5. This must be said of it, though black, yet comely; though it does not want some spots they do not so far mar her beauty, but that in all its several administrations there appears a singular grace; it hath indeed its blemishes and failings, yet every measure and degree thereof does not forefault her relation rights and privileges. 6. Is it not a marvelous frame, which does not want a corrupt mixture, yet in its rule and constitution does allow no corruption; and though many are found gross within, yet does it difference betwixt the precious and the vile, yea, shuts its gates as well as it opens, and is no more tender and easy in her admission, than awful and authoritative in her rejection. 7. Is so well constituted, that her officers have their appointment, and each their work and charge design'd, yet no greater variety of service and imployments than there is of gifts, which from her head are dispensed and suted to the same. 8. She is of such a mould and frame, that though she can boast of an intrinsick power, within her self, yet must derive it from another fountain, yea, must have a directory and rule from her supreme head and lawgiver for exercising the acts of that power, which also hath its proper object even the inward man, and its peculiar end, the edification of the body, to which this power and the exercise thereof is directed. 9. This is such a body, the members whereof are indeed subject to the magistrate, and denies no due obedience to that power, yet without any subordination or subjecting of the church as such to an human power, and though it hath not its authority or jurisdiction from men, it denies no just respect to these; it does bind and loose upon the earth which no human power can make void; and though cast in among the nations, yet by peculiar bounds is kept from all other societies distinct; she hath her judicatories, and there a subordination of the lesser to the greater, yet no allowed pre-eminence and inequality amongst her officers; yea, though her government is truly monarchick with respect to her head, for there is but one supreme Lord, yet with respect to the servants and officers it is a most excellent well tempered aristocracy, which holds off these gradual differences of power and greatness

amongst

amongſt them, which is ſo much in uſe amongſt the nations; In a word, O will you conſider this choice and exquiſite frame, and you will ſee how both tenderneſs and ſeverity doth here concurr, what a healing there is here in her ſharpeſt rebukes and cenſures; whilſt a private eſſay, for gainings, is to go before a publick and judicial procedure, yea, her authoritative determinations without prejudice to the judgment of chriſtian prudence and diſcretion, which belongs to every one of her members: Conſider alſo how ſhe wears not out, but hath ſtill a ſpring after the winter, hath both her ſigns and her ſeaſons, and whilſt ſhe is loſing, and in a decay as to particular members, ſhe is ſtill traveling in birth for a new offſpring and ſucceſſion: O that they who ſtand a far would but come near and ſeriouſly look on this rare piece of work, *Go about* Zion, *conſider well her towers and bulwarks*, &c. that you may ſee this is a fabrick the Lord hath founded, and raiſed up, and that ſurely this piece of the word is therein fulfilled, *His way is perfect, and he does all things well.*

II. Is not this great truth clearly demonſtrate, not only in the frame, but in the whole conduct, and *adminiſtration of providence about the church*, which is indeed one of the moſt marvelous diſcoveries we have of God here; yea, even to the world, is oft convincingly obvious, through what a variety of diſpenſations, he uſeth to bring forth his work, and makes his way oft break out of the boſom of a dark cloud; yea, ſo unexpectedly can make theſe perplexed changes, with which the church militant is toſſed, reſolve in ſuch a ſatisfying cloſe, that it may be ſeen they were all directed for his intereſt and advantage: I know this is a great deep, and we cannot have ſuch a diſcovery of the providence of God about the church, nor reach the meaning of things in their firſt mould, as in their after-tendency and product, O that marvelous ſight which ſhall once be, when that great work of providence, that *now is put over in the hand of the* Mediator, hath its perfect cloſe, and the whole frame and contexture ſet up together as one entire piece to look upon, that is now by ſeveral pieces, and through a various ſucceſſion of ages carried on: yet we muſt ſay, the Lord herein comes ſo near, even in the darkeſt times, and makes the glory of this truth in ſuch a meaſure ſhine forth, that may convincingly witneſs to any ordinary obſervers that the way of the Lord is *perfect* in all that he does; I ſhall here offer ſome few things that in every time are obvious to theſe who take pleaſure in ſuch a diſcovery, and deſire not to keep at a diſtance therewith. 1. Muſt it not be ſaid of his way, that he does nothing in vain, but makes all things congruous to his end, even things that amongſt themſelves do moſt croſs one another, does he not carry on his deſign by the miſcarying of inſtruments, and brings forth his greateſt works by means very ſmall and contemptible? I know the world would object, they can ſee no ſuch things, and indeed providence cannot be underſtood, or the meaning thereof by one view, but I muſt ask, do you diſcern the motion of the hand upon the clock, even whilſt it is certainly going forward; yet when it comes to the hour and ſtrikes you will ſee it was then moving: It is ſure there are ſuch periods, that providence hath, where its meaning does not clearly break up, until then that it comes to the ſtriking of the hour, if we may ſo ſay; and then the moſt ſtupid are forced to obſerve what once ſeem'd moſt improbable, in the way of the Lord. 2. Is it not alſo obvious how the Lord doth enſnare men in the work of their own hands? and turns their wrath unto his praiſe, how he takes the wiſe and outwits them by their counſels, makes events fall out contrary to the ſecond cauſes, fruſtrates the moſt promiſing means, and by things unknown and unthought upon, does oft bring forth the deliverance of the church; yea, how out of ſhame and

reproach

reproach he do's even bring about his glory; ſure theſe are not ſo far in the dark that in any age the world can altogether pretend ignorance thereof, *and is not his way perfect*, of which ſuch things can be ſaid? 3. Have we not this diſcovery how the church is oft fed by the rod, yea, under that appears with ſuch advantage, that it may be ſaid her meat hath been brought forth out of the eater, how uſually is her mercy and enlargement prepared for her, by the rod, and is humbled in order to a deliverance, yea oft is one ſtep of the way of the Lord made clear to her by another; O is not here ſo excellent and marvelous a method, that all the wit and invention of the world cannot follow.

III. His way is indeed perfect, and by an infinite wiſdom managed, which do's at once, and by the very ſame providence reach ſo many ſeveral deſigns, yea bring forth ſuch various and contrary effects, that no human reaſon could ever judge the reſult and concluſion by the premiſes, how ſeverity, and mercy ſhould at once be brought forth, a more full ſtroke ſhould come on the adverſary, by a long forbearance thereof; how he ſhould alſo make uſe of the ſame means, both for humbling and proving, and to do his people good in the latter end: O how perfect muſt this way be, where all the ſteps thereof, and after product would ſeem repugnant yet no real jar; for the church ſinking yet do's not periſh in a flame, yet not conſumed, but is thereby kept alive, brought under the yoke of the oppreſſor to make her grow and flouriſh, is wounded and ſmitten for her further healing, and a witneſs of his tenderneſs to her thereby; hath a greater weight and burden put on, to give her thus eaſe and enlargement, yea, is chaſtned and meets with ſuffering, that ſhe may reſt in the day of trouble; ſure theſe are part of the ways of God, and may be viſibly demonſtrate in the conduct of his providence about the church even to the conviction of the world; but oh! it is hard to ſee where men will ſhut their eyes. 5. Is it not obvious, what ſtrange things do ſometimes fall in, betwixt the beginning and cloſe of ſome ſpecial piece of providence about the church, that do paſs human reach to give a preſent reaſon for the ſame; yet in all theſe may there not be diſcerned a remarkable dependence and concatenation of things, how in ſuch a variety of croſs events, and in a long continued tract of providence, every thing falls in aright, in its own place, yea every ſtep, every circumſtance ſo proportioned by a marvelous diſpoſal, and conduct thereof, to ſute another, for making the whole complex providence beautiful, that on a ſerious review the world muſt confeſs, this is a concatenation ſo ſtrange, that muſt be his work and that alone, who ſees things from the beginning to the end. 6. How perfect is his way who can haſten, and diſpatch his work by delays, and when he ſeems to take a long circuit in bringing about his deſign, yet loſes no time, but in ſuch a viſible going back, do's moſt effectually move forward, yea, is it not ſeen how he makes things fall in, that are very unexpected croſs, and remote (that would never have entered into our thoughts) to anſwer his bleſſed end? and even diſpoſe that, which above all might ſeem moſt directly deſtructive to the church, to be of all other things moſt effectual, and ſubſervient to her advance, brings her more quickly forward to the harbour, by a ſtorm than a calm, O have we not ſo great things to obſerve in the way of the Lord, that may ſhew it is perfect. 7. It is alſo very clear though not on the firſt view, yet in the cloſe and iſſue, what a certain ſteady motion providence hath and keeps in its courſe, whilſt the world is reeling to and fro, how the church's mercy hath by greateſt diſappointments been more fully anſwered, than in the moſt probable way, yea when her deliverance ſeem'd further off, and had been much followed with many a weary look from ſome other corner with what a ſtrange ſurpri-

ſal, do's providence oft appear at her hand, as it were from under the ground with an unexpected mercy. 8. You may ſee his way is perfect who puts a peculiar beauty upon every occurrent of providence, and brings it forth in the very fit opportune time, that it could not fall out more ſeaſonably and with more advantage to the church; is there not a ſeen cauſe for her ſharp trials and the neceſſity thereof no leſs diſcernible, than there is of the winter, for the profit and advantage of the earth; and is it not alſo manifeſt her reviving came never too late, but in the very fitteſt time; I know the world may object, they can ſee this in the revolutions of the year, but not in any ſuch changes of the church, yet I am ſure this is manifeſt that the church of Chriſt hath her ſad and more comforting times here, with as diſcernible a ſucceſſion of the one to the other as there is of the ſummer to the winter, yea that under theſe viciſſitudes of her condition ſhe is ſtill ſeen to look forth with a peculiar advantage; I ſhall add, what a marvelous compoſition and temperament of contraries is diſcernible in this excellent frame of providence; there is nothing here incongruous, nothing here too ſmall which doth not fall under its reach, and nothing ſo great that can over-reach it, here is no jar or diſagreeing with the diligent uſe of means, yet do's this riſe ſo far above the ſame, that no human care can bend it to their will, nor is there any running croſs to ſuch a current: here is indeed an unſearchable deep! Yet ſo much is there broken up, and made clear, that may convincingly witneſs and verify this truth, even to ordinary obſervers, the way of the Lord is perfect, and what we now cannot attain in its diſcovery we ſhould learn to admire and ſolidly believe a more clear manifeſtation thereof.

IV. I ſhall yet further purſue this demonſtration with reſpect to *that great and marvelous work of God, in the redemption of the church*; a contrivance we may ſay more wonderful than this whole ſtructure of the univerſe of the heavens and earth, which are ſo exquiſitely fram'd: For here the thing it ſelf is not more aſtoniſhing, than the way and conduct of infinite wiſdom is, in the whole frame, and all the ſteps thereof: O this great thing, that mens diſtance therefrom do's only keep them from being dazled, yea there ignorance is the great let why they do not more wonder at it; this is indeed far above nature, that without a divine illumination, it cannot be known, or underſtood, yet we may ſay, ſo much is brought forth and diſcovered, that thoſe who have only report, and thence give ſome ordinary aſſent thereto, cannot have their reaſon and judgment in exerciſe without ſome ſuch conviction upon their ſouls, that ſurely this is a contrivance above human reach, and worthy of the great God; yea that herein his way is moſt abſolutely perfect; and no ſight can be like this where we may ſee ſo excellent a correſpondence between the foundation and ſuperſtructure, that the whole tract of the goſpel is but one intire and complete mean for glorifying God, and do's in this, as the ultimate end reſolve: Here men may ſee the greatneſs of his power, that unexpreſſible freedom of his grace, the holy ſeverity of juſtice, all meet and joyn together in a ſweet agreement; where both juſtice is ſalved, and fully anſwered, and yet ſinners ſaved, where mercy do's rejoice over condemnation, vengeance is taken on our inventions, and the inventers eſcape: O ſtrange! a redemption without price and abſolutely free, as to ſinners; yet all that a juſt God could exact fully ſatisfied and told down; it is here we may riſe and purſue this great thing up to the fountain head, which is the ſoveraign pleaſure of God, and is the internal impulſive cauſe, and thence follow it down to that ſatisfaction of the mediator, which is the great meritorious cauſe, and here we may ſee, how marvelouſly well ordered all the ſteps of this way are, all the parts of this contrivance; how the elect are made meet for the inheri-

inheritance through ſanctification of the ſpirit, how faith hath its ſpecial concurrence and inſtrumentality, without prejudice to the abſolute freedom of grace, ſince it is freely given to believe; how theſe excellent means are by a moſt ſtrait connection linked with the eternal counſel of God, and in a moſt beautiful order joined one with another. Here do's ſanctification flow from an eternal decree, and like an excellent ſtream doth run down through time, until it loſe it ſelf, to ſay ſo, in that great deep of everlaſting bleſſedneſs, yea thus the purpoſe of the Lord runs under ground, concerning his people, until it break up at laſt in their heart, by their anſwering to the call of the goſpel; O how ſtately a piece of work this is, and is not his way perfect therein, wherein you may ſee that grand plot of the devil to undo man, break upon himſelf, and by the ſeed of the woman his head cruſhed; where ſo glorious a fabrick is raiſed out of ſo great a ruin, and poor man eſtabliſhed by his fall, where the glory of the ſoveraign God, the freedom of grace, and mans bleſſedneſs do at once meet together, where the cure is broad and large as the wound, and the reſtauration made to anſwer to every part of that ruin, I mean not only in man's being ranſomed from eternal wrath, but that the enmity ſhould be killed and taken away, and ſuch a marvelous change of his nature by the renewing of the ſpirit, which even here reſtores him in part to that which he loſt; it is on this bleſſed contrivance we may ſee men brought under a conſtraint by irreſiſtible grace, yet without violence, their reaſon further raiſed and refined, yet not broken, and its true liberty not taken away, but reſtored; yea a notable conſiſtency betwixt moral perſuaſive arguments and the efficacious power of grace, betwixt mens planting and watering in the uſe of means, and the alone encreaſe thereof from the Lord, betwixt a phyſical and moral concurrence in producing one and the ſame effect, betwixt thoſe two deſires in prayer, *Da Domine, quod jubes, & jube quod vis*; Is there not likewiſe here a moſt excellent ſutableneſs and congruity, betwixt repentance and remiſſion of ſins, without prejudice to the freedom of grace, ſince he gives repentance as well as requires it, and makes his people what he would have them to be; O how marvelous a contrivance is there where the bleſſed majeſty of God finds an argument in himſelf when man had none wherewith to plead, was found in the form of a ſervant, and became our neareſt kinſman, to redeem the inheritance; where his peoples ſtanding is enſured by another ſurety and ſtrength, than their own, not on their apprehending, but their being apprehended; where the Lord do's oblige himſelf by bond to make that good, which is only of grace, and is moſt freely given; where he both frames the deſire within the ſoul, and ſatisfies it; I ſhall only add, it is here the redeem'd have nothing in themſelves to boaſt of, and the roprobate none but themſelves to accuſe, for on whomſoever that door is ſhut, they have therein actively concurred, to draw a bar for ſhutting themſelves out.

V. I ſhall offer one inſtance more wherein this great truth may be demonſtrate to the world that the way of the Lord is perfect that his works are done in judgment, yea do's all things well with reſpect to that *marvelous order of nature and diſpoſal of the works of God under the ſun*, how unexpreſſibly well all are fitted for ſome uſe, and directed to their proper end: This is indeed a truth, wherein the greateſt atheiſts may ſee this part of ſcripture convincingly verified, wherein God comes ſo near, that men may feel after him, *Acts* xvii. 27. that it may be ſaid, there is no way to ſhift this diſcovery, but to ſtop their ears, and ſhut their eyes: O what a wonderful diſpoſal may be ſeen, even in the commoneſt things, with a mutual ſubſerviency to each other; and in this great variety and throng of the creatures, is it not obvious how each hath its voice and ſpeech, to give us ſomething of inſtruction, and every thing

hath

hath ſome matter of wonder in it, that we may ſay, it is hard to be an atheiſt, there muſt be a ſtrange violenting of their light, where the inviſible God comes ſo near to make himſelf known by things viſible, and by ſo marvelous a conduct and ordering thereof, ſhew's unto the ſons of men he do's all things well: Oh, may it not be ſaid, we ceaſe to wonder, becauſe every day we live and converſe amongſt wonders: now it is here the world hath a demonſtration of the ſcripture, that they dare not debate, leſt they ſhould deny ſenſe as well as reaſon, and if any will queſtion the glorious former of all things, why they are thus ordered and diſpoſed, let him but retire within himſelf and he'll find the want and defect is truly within, which he would challenge in the way of the Lord; may we not ſee with aſtoniſhment, this frame and compoſure of the univerſe, how each thing doth anſwer its part, and to the conſervation of the whole, how amidſt a great contrariety an excellent concord is manifeſt, in all its different parts, natures and diſpoſitions: I muſt truly ſay not only duty but delight and pleaſure may call men to this ſtudy; yea, even to looſe themſelves as it were in ſo ſweet a labyrinth, where it is more eaſy to enter than to find an outgate, and all things do witneſs even to mens ſenſes the truth of the ſcripture; it is ſad we have ſo choice and true a hiſtory every day to read on of the works of God, which are not in themſelves greater than that wiſdom is, by which they are ordered, and it ſhould be for the moſt part as a ſealed book: but it is not here in a general this truth can be reached, O will you come and ſee, conſider the work of the Lord, and you muſt alſo ſee it is perfect, and his ways are judgment, yea, that he hath done all things well, do but conſider this ſtupendious frame of the *Univerſe*, a fabrick that in all its parts is moſt exactly joyned, and nothing in it defective or out of order; here you may ſee that great miniſter of nature the *Sun*, with what advantage it is placed and fitted to diſpenſe its light and refreſhing influences to the earth, is it not with ſuch wiſdom, that to move in a higher or lower orb would not thus anſwer the advantage of things below, with what a conſtant motion does it travel betwixt the tropicks to fulfill its annual courſe, and in diverſe parts does ſucceſſively ariſe, that by turns it may give the ſeveral parts of the earth a viſit; ſhould we ceaſe to wonder at the riſing and ſetting thereof, becauſe it is ſo frequently ſeen; O may not this arreſt our thoughts with aſtoniſhment with what wiſdom it is made ſubſervient all along its courſe to cauſe *ſummer* and *winter*, *ſpring* and *harveſt*; yea, how its approaches and withdrawings are gradual, that by its aſcent in the ſpring it may diſpoſe our bodies for the ſummer, and by its deſcent in ſuch a degree in the harveſt may prepare and fit us for the winter, that there ſhould not be an immediate bordering betwixt theſe extremes; is not its correſpondence alſo manifeſt, that it hath with things here below, which does not only reach the ſurface of the earth, but the moſt inward bowels and ſecret caverns thereof, for its power is known in minerals as well as plants: Is it not alſo evident that this glorious body of the *Moon* though of a leſſer glory than the other, is for an other uſe than for men to gaze on, how it keeps them from groaping in utter darkneſs through the night, and lights a candle to the world when the ſun is gone down, which by its withdrawing does ſo far diſcover the glory of the *Moon* and ſtars, that its brightneſs did vail and darken; its influence is known alſo upon the ſea, upon ſeeds and plants, yea, upon the humours and complection of mens bodies: O what innumerable employments are theſe by which it is made continually ſubſervient to the world! And do you not ſee, how the night hath its ſpecial uſe, and is well ordered as well as the day, yea, that it hath its peculiar beauty, and by its darkneſs doth commend the light, and makes its approach more ſweet and deſirable; this gives

the

the labouring world ſometime for repoſe, and moſt obſervably anſwers man's wearineſs and neceſſity of ſuch a reſt with ſo fit a ſeaſon, that we may ſay it but draws a curtain about us for that end, and do thus retire the earth, and puts it in a ſweet and ſilent compoſure from the noiſe and hurryings of the day; yea, does not every evening ſolemnly warn men of their approaching death, and ſwift paſſing away of time, that they may have no excuſe of being ſurpriſed in this great change, who have ſo grave, ſo frequent a monitor, to ſpeak it to them; but let us a little further follow this choice enquiry and ſearch of nature which is ſo clear a witneſs to the ſcripture, and you may ſee how marvelous theſe various motions of the heavens are, the poſition of the ſtars and conſtellations, where each hath its own proper courſe, yet all carried about to one general and common end, to ſhew there muſt be a firſt mover who is not ſubject to motion or change, but does manifeſtly determine all theſe: O ſtrange! How does this great body of the earth hing upon nothing, that a thing ſo vaſt and ponderous ſhould lean upon the air as on a foundation, muſt there not be here a piece of art above human reach, how thus it does keep its center, and reſts there upon, and is it not clear how ſteady the axis of the earth is, and perpetually parallel with it ſelf, that it cannot tumble this or that way: What a marvelous order is alſo ſeen in theſe higher motions of the celeſtial bodies, of which ſome are ſlow, others rapid, ſome tend to the *Eaſt*, others towards the *Weſt*, and yet from theſe though thus croſs to other, there reſults a ſingular harmony, in which the conſervation of the world and production of things here below are concern'd, which could not ſo well have anſwered this, without ſuch a variety in their courſes; It is true, the Lord might have made every day a years length, and caus'd the ſun keep its courſe, from *Eaſt* to *Weſt* ſo long, but O how well are all theſe things ordered, and that thus he doth divide our life in ſuch ſhort ſtages, to make us more frequently mind our change, we ſee likewiſe how marvelouſly the earth is framed in its various parts and proportions, and the ſingular advantage it hath both in its poſture and figure; the mountains and high places do not mar its beauty, nor want their uſe, where the beaſts have a ſhelter provided; and is not nature likewiſe more diſplayed and laid open to men by the plains and valleys, which are to the earth a ſpecial ornament? How manifold is the uſe of the air which fills up that vaſt ſpace betwixt the higher and lower world; it is here the birds find uſe for their wings, thorough this the rains find an eaſy paſſage, this does interveen betwixt the ſun and the earth, yet is no let to the communication, either of light or heat, but its ſcorching is thus qualified, by that ſweet cool breathing of the air; is not the ſingular uſe and advantage of the winds alſo known? And how theſe are both directed and bounded, ſo that men can neither cauſe a ſtorm nor a calm at their pleaſure; and O can you look on the *Sea*, and not wonder, what marvelous things are there, how it is ſhut up with gates and bars, and hath its appointed bounds, without which there could be no reaſon, how a bank of ſand ſhould reſtrain the great ocean from breaking forth, its manifold uſe and advantage is alſo known; would any wiſh that the whole earth were dry land? And O ſtrange that this not only is made paſſable, but by that art of navigation becomes a more eaſy way for tranſport and commerce, by which cities and countries are made to flouriſh, do you not ſee that regular courſe it keeps in its ebbings and flowings, the ſingular uſe and ſubſervience of the tides, ſo that when men are difficulted in an inquiry about the natural cauſe of theſe, they cannot but obſerve the ſpecial end and advantage thereof, may we not with wonder alſo ſee, how theſe parts of the world, which have the moſt ſcorching day, and greateſt heat, have uſually the longeſt night to qualify it with ſuch a cool-

ing moiſture, how theſe countries which have no rain, as *Egypt*, have ſome ſupply thereof by an overflowing of the rivers, do you ſee any members either of men, or beaſts ſuperfluous, and want an uſe, or is there any poiſon but hath ſome peculiar antidote provided, yea, the moſt hurtful creatures as *Serpents* and *Vipers* are found of ſingular uſe in medicine againſt their own hurt, as the oil of *Scorpions* is againſt the ſting thereof; you ſee the poor people have medicinal waters provided without money, and it is a notable remark which is certainly known of one who incloſed ſome ſuch well in his ground that he might put an impoſt thereon, had it taken away and run dry on his hand; what a marvelous uſe is there of natural antipathies and ſympathies whereon the operation of medicine, the ſpecial improvement of navigation, by making uſe of the load-ſtone doth ſo much depend, you ſee how the harveſt gives a large compenſation for the toil of the ſpring, and do not the poor man's labours through the day make his bed ſoft in the evening, and his reſt ſweet unto him? You ſee what correſpondence the heavens keep with the earth in theſe ſweet refreſhing ſhowers, by which its ſeminal vertue is drawn forth, and thus the rain doth moiſten what the heat would ſcorch, you may ſee how it is deſtilled and drop'd down, not in violent floods, but as it were through a ſmall ſieve, or otherwiſe it would hurt more than help; you would not deſire to want rain, nor yet to have it perpetual, and thus it is ordered; or not the vapours exhaled from the earth, that by refreſhing ſhowers they may return thither again? O how manifold are the works of the Lord! And in what wiſdom hath he done them all; Is not the pain and travel of the beaſts in bringing forth their young, proportioned to their condition, and to that lodging they have, *Job* xxxix. 3. *They bow themſelves, and bring forth their young, and caſt forth their ſorrows*, and as their time and duration is for moſt part ſhorter than mans, is not their growth alſo ſuited thereto; you ſee men have their lodging finiſhed ere they come in the world, the breaſts are provided, and by a wonderful inſtinct, they are taught to ſeek after the ſame; it is known how the want of hearing or ſight uſeth ſome other way to be recompenſed, with ſome ſpecial natural ſagacity; Yea, a want and defect in ſome parts of the body is oft ſupplied with a greater agility in ſome other members thereof, which is known in many remarkable inſtances, ſuch as that woman in this country, not long ſince who had no arms from her birth, but could with no leſs dexterity make uſe of her right-foot for all the uſes of her hand; You ſee how the beaſts have ſome natural defence and are taught ſelf preſervation, and what the hare and hind want of the lion's paw and ſtrength is made up oft by a more ſwift foot; what an advantageous antipathy there is amongſt the beaſts, leſt the earth ſhould be over-run with theſe which are hurtful; the dog fitted by a ſtrange tendency of its kind, to purſue the wolf and the fox, and the cat for deſtroying of rats; You ſee how the oxen are tamed to endure the yoke, and brought under diſcipline, whoſe ſtrength is above many of the wild beaſts; are not theſe things that are moſt abſolutely neceſſary moſt eaſy likewiſe to be had? and whilſt there is ſuch a variety of labour and toil does attend the lot of man here, doth not the earth alſo afford a variety of delights? You ſee the birds need no inſtructor to build their neſts, and chooſe a fit place, nor do they miſtake their ſeaſons, yea, do not theſe ſweet muſicians by their natural melody call men to praiſe, whoſe debt is much above theirs? Is there not a marvelous coalition betwixt the graft and the tree, which exceeds human art, if nature did not ſo wonderfully co-operate therein, and in the inoculating a ſmall bud into a ſtock; and O that wonderful encreaſe that follows the ſeed thrown into the ground how it dies and rots there that it may riſe with the greater luſtre and advan-

tage, and by ſuch a ſignificant emblem teach men the certainty of the raiſing of their bodies, for it's ſure the ordinary things of nature are great and convincing hieroglyphicks to hold forth more divine things if we could but read them: do you not ſee what veins of coals and other minerals go through the earth? whence it is furniſht and hath fit materials for daily uſe, and for an improvement of mens faculties: is not the earth watered by an intercourſe which ſprings and rivers have with the ſea? and what ſome parts of the world want, is it not in other things ſupplied; that every country hath almoſt ſome peculiar advantages; it is known how the coldeſt places of the earth, do moſt abound with the warmeſt furres; you ſee the beaſts want not their table; and is not the lillie well clothed? Doth the graſs of the ground want its uſe? Yea is not the very colour thereof notably ſuted for mens eyes? What cauſe of wonder is there of the different forms, the virtues and variety of plants? You ſee the little ants have their magazine and ſtorehouſe, the bees want not ſome order and government; yea no human skill can frame ſuch work as theirs is: But *O man* what a curious and exquiſite fabrick is that which did come in amongſt the laſt of the creation? but as the greateſt wonder thereof, a moſt rare piece of work of a ſtrange various and ſubtile compoſition, in which there is ſo notable an harmony made up of many contraries; I think theſe who would learn atheiſm are not only concerned to ſtifle their reaſon but to ſhut their eyes from looking on themſelves and the frame of their bodies, which is ſo curiouſly wrought with nerves ſinews and veins, with ſuch a variety of parts, and yet not one bone or muſcle ſuperfluous. (¶)

THE FOURTH ARGUMENT.

I Shall here offer to prove the ſcriptures accompliſhment is this, *That whereof the moſt part, as to theſe ſpecial predictions, and promiſes that concern the church, is fulfilled, and hath now taken place in their appointed times, which we may at this day clearly read in the event, and but a little part thereof now remaineth to be made out, muſt be a ſure truth.* But the ſcripture is thus fulfilled, and the prophecies thereof now made legible in the hiſtory of providence, and in the works of God about his church. Therefore, &c. I would premit here ſome few things e'er I ſpeak particularly to this argument.

1. Though the ſcripture is thus wonderfully ſuited by the Lord, and taketh place in every generation as if it were alone directed to that time, yet, it is alſo clear that a ſpecial part thereof hath its proper accompliſhment in theſe ages, and periods of time, to which it doth in a peculiar way relate, ſome part of it, which did concern the times of the *Old Teſtament*, ſome that doth alſo anſwer to the times of the goſpel, and a part of it which hath a peculiar reſpect to theſe latter days, which the Lord is now bringing forth, and we wait for a more full accompliſhment, that it is on a near approach. 2. It is alſo ſure that the whole work of God, and his providence about his church here in the world, which was perfect from the beginning, and before him from eternity, is comprehended under the written word, where the Lord hath fully revealed his mind and counſel anent every event, and concernment of the church; though we oft be in the dark in finding out the ſame, but the event will in due time ſpeak for it ſelf, which ſhould cauſe us until then, with much ſobriety, paſs our judgment on ſome of theſe truths that are not yet fulfilled. 3. It is clear that the prophets of old did not only foretel ſuch great changes, and revolutions, as we are to go over the church's head, and declare the certainty thereof, but we find theſe prophecies oft point at the times, and periods

riods of time, whereto they did relate, and though ſometimes in dark terms, yet did clearly ſhew that there was a certain prefixed time, and not at every time they could have their performance. 4. We would conſider how the full accompliſhing of the ſcripture, and the perfecting the Lord's work about his church will be at once, and doth keep foot together, and then ſhall a full, and ſatisfying diſcovery of God's way, and providence, and all that he hath been doing in the world clearly appear, when the great myſtery of God in his written word is finiſhed, and the church ſo near to land.

That I may ſpeak a little to ſo grave a ſubject: I would lay down theſe two things to be conſidered. 1. How much of the ſcripture, and predictions thereof may be now clearly verifyed in the event. 2. What doth yet remain to have an accompliſhment in theſe laſt times, by which we may certainly judge how near the Lord's work about his church is to a cloſe; concering the firſt I ſhall point at ſome of theſe moſt concerning events and changes which the church hath met with, wherein we may ſee what of the ſcripture may at this day be read in the hiſtory of providence, and is certainly fulfilled.

I. WHAT IS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED.

I. LET us go back to theſe firſt times after the fall; and ſee *that dreadful ſtroke which came upon the old world by the flood after an univerſal defection from God*, and we ſhall there find the fulfilling of that which *Noah* that great preacher of righteouſneſs had oft foretold; and of theſe threatnings which by *Moſes* were there recorded, wherein it may be very manifeſt. 1. That this truth, beſides divine authority, no records of ancient times, no antiquity could ever contradict, yea, ſome of the oldeſt writers do clearly witneſs ſomething of an univerſal *deluge* over the earth, with the ſtrange preſervation of ſome from it, however they were in the dark as to many circumſtances about it; *Joſephus* doth cite *Beroſus* the *Caldean* about this, who without doubt had then ſome of theſe oldeſt records true, and uncorrupt. *Euſebius* alſo doth mention ſome fragments of *Abidenus* and *Appolodorus*, which in his time were extant, clearly pointing at the flood, and at *Noah* under the name of *Ziſuthrus* with his ſending out birds to ſee if the waters aſſwaged. 2. There is nothing here doth contradict reaſon, how this might be brought about, even in the way of ordinary natural cauſes, which the Lord did make uſe of for that end; for we find the windows of heaven were opened, the air being condenſed into clouds, and their retentive power looſed, theſe great floodgates were thus ſet looſe; which falling not in drops, but all in a full body, like the ſpouts and cataracts of the *Weſt-Indies* might ſoon overwhelm the earth with abundance of water, while theſe fountains alſo of the great deep beneath were broken up, which was not only the ocean let forth to go over its banks, but an univerſal vent to all the veins of the earth, and that great maſs of waters which is in the bowels thereof, which from beneath meeting theſe that were from above, may give men a clear and rational account how ſuch a thing might be. 3. This part of the ſcripture is moſt agreeable to the great ſcope and drift of the ſame, for it points out an univerſal defection, and an univerſal ſtroke meeting together, it leads us forward to Chriſt, to whom the ark was an excellent ſhadow, and of that ſalvation which in and by him, the church hath from eternal wrath, and is a very manifeſt pledge, and ſign of that laſt deſtruction of the world, which though not in that manner, yet ſhall once ſurely be, and find men in ſuch a condition, as this flood found them in the days of *Noah*.

(¶) II. What

(5) II. What we find expreſly threatned by the Lord, *Gen.* xi. 7. as a ſtroke and judgment upon men for their ambition and pride, *The confounding of their language*, is it not alſo moſt clearly verified and writ forth to the view of the world in the event? that whilſt men cannot deny or debate a thing which is ſo conſpicuous and undeniable, they muſt alſo ſee a fulfilling of the ſcripture, and that there was a divine hand in this ſtrange ſtroke which may be a convincing refutation of atheiſm, if ſuch do not willingly ſhut their eyes at theſe clear evidences.

1. That it is ſure, there is ſuch a confuſion and variety of languages in the earth at this day, whence it is divided, one part thereof ſo much rent from another, commerce and correſpondence thus made difficult, and a bar drawn betwixt nations, by a different ſpeech, and do not the moſt ancient records of the world witneſs the ſame to have been in former ages. 2. It is alſo ſure that no tradition or human hiſtory, but the ſcripture only gives us an account of this ſtrange thing; how it ſhould be, or whence its true riſe is; yea theſe who have writ moſt of other things, yet can give no reaſon why they write in one language more than in another, but that it is proper to their country where they had their education, but how the race of men who have ſuch a community in other things ſhould be thus divided; is indeed a myſtery which divine truth can only unvail and ſhew its meaning. 3. It is ſure there is no language by another that is natural to men, but what *ex inſtituto* is acquired, whether by long continued uſe as children do their mother tongue, or by ſet rules, it is true *Adam* who was the firſt man had his by ſome extraordinary infuſion, but it is found a pitiful fancy alledged by ſome, that young children who have never heard ſpeech and have been thus kept at a diſtance would ſpeak the firſt language of the world and conſequently *Hebrew*, for the contrary of this is certainly proven. 4. Is not this confuſion and diverſity of languages which is in the world a moſt ſtrange and marvelous thing, which in no ordinary way, yea without ſomething of a miracle, could be brought about, and to no continuance of time, or invention of men can be attribute, if we conſider theſe things. 1. It is clear that if man can be traced back to ſome original and beginning, there muſt then have been ſome one language, whilſt the world was but in a family, ſo that if you will admit the truth of the creation, you may ſee it was not ſo at the beginning. 2. Is it not undeniable that men could not chooſe ſo great a plague, and judgment on themſelves, if they had any uſe of reaſon, which would divide betwixt them, and the great part of mankind, hinder trade and mutual interchange with other countries, either in exporting, or importing moſt neceſſary commodities; that which alſo would obſtruct human knowledge, and the diſcovery of theſe excellent inventions and experiments of other places, yea give man, whoſe days are ſo few, ſuch a ſore toil and labour to acquire but a few of theſe many different languages which are in the world. 3. Is it not alſo clear that this is above human reach which men cannot judge, how in an ordinary way ſuch different languages could have been found out and afterwards acquired by the body of nations, yea how there ſhould be ſuch an agreement in this amongſt a vaſt multitude of different tempers and capacities, for it is obvious there ſhould have then been an inventing of theſe firſt radical languages? I mean theſe that are not dependent upon, or interwoven one with another, but are wholly different as *Greek*, *Latin*, &c. and therewith ſuch a vaſt *Dictionary* of words with their ſignification and rules to conjoin them in ſentences, muſt have neceſſarily been framed, and abandoning alſo and turning off of ſome former language, ſo far as to the bringing of it in oblivion; yea ſhould the univerſal conſent and concurrence of the multitude in

ſuch places be required? I confeſs this were not ſo ſtrange if ſuch a difference betwixt languages were but in ſome peculiar mode or propriety of phraſes, and alteration of words according to the various tempers and climates of the earth; but we may ſee what different languages there are, wholly independent on other, not only in original words, but in the very whole frame and bulk, which can be no compound of other languages, as many of our modern tongues are, which do's truly ſtate the caſe in ſuch a manner, that the ſcripture only can reſolve how this ſhould be, yea it is known beſides many branches, commixtures and variations of languages which through continuance of time, through conqueſt and mingling of nations together, are in the world, there is beſides a vaſt number of theſe that may be on cleartſt ground judged original and mother tongues, of which (whatever leſſer variation there hath been by the adding of ſome new words, or the quitting of old, yet the whole bulk do's remain intire. 4. What a ſtrange and marvelous thing muſt this be, if we conſider that moſt of ancient material languages were previous to the uſe of letters, whence rules or a method could be convoyed from one to another, if it had been only ſome human invention; for we may know from ſureſt antiquity how long it was e're ſeveral nations reached a further way to communicate knowledge and repreſent their conceptions than by ſpeech and a vocal tradition, or ſome ſignificant ſymbols or hieroglyphicks which were then much in uſe to ſupply the want of letters, is it not known how little either by pen or printing hath been diſcovered to the world, but of ſuch late time, as is from cleareſt hiſtories written to us, thence we find very little of the *Greek* language upon record before *Homer*'s time; now may not this clearly demonſtrate that in an ordinary way theſe languages could not then have been acquired. 5. It may be very convincing what the ſcripture anent this holds forth that, by theſe different languages, nations and families were at firſt divided, *Gen.* xi. yea, that this was the firſt riſe of bounding one of them from another, for which the world could never give another cauſe; thus did the Lord incloſe his church in *Iſrael*, and by this diverſity of languages did outlaw the reſt of the earth, for there was that venerable *firſt* language of the *Hebrew* kept up, by which theſe ſacred oracles of the *Old Teſtament* were made known. I ſhall further add, is not a divine hand eminently ſeen in this? that ſo great a bar, which for ſo long a time was betwixt the world, ſhould not only at laſt be taken off, but ſuch a curſe turn'd into a bleſſing, that the power of God and his very immediate work in ſpeading the light amongſt ſo many people of a ſtrange language might now under the goſpel be more conſpicuous, that ſuch an interdiction had been ſerved on the world thereby, to ſhut the nations out from the church; for we may ſay there hath been as ſingle a miracle in the gift of tongues under the *New Teſtament* as there was formerly in the confuſion thereof.

III. What we have expreſly promiſed in the word of the *Church's delivery from Egypt*, and was foretold by *Joſeph* at his death, that God ſhould ſurely bring back his people out of that land, for which he left his bones to lie unburied as a pledge thereof, hath now many ages paſt been fulfilled. It is long ſince that remarkable day when God made a way for his people through the *Red-ſea*, and his power known upon *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*, ſince *Moſes* with the church did ſing that triumphant ſong, *The horſe and his rider he hath caſt in the ſea*; wherein theſe things are moſt clear.

1. That this was a deed known, and publick in the time, which was not done in a corner, but in the view of the world, and before all the children of *Iſrael*, and by them atteſted, and with greateſt carefulneſs tranſmitted to their children, and by theſe to the following generations, as a thing never to be

be forgotten. 2. Was teſtifyed by *Moſes* ſo great a perſon, an eye witneſs thereof, one whom even the moſt ancient of heathen writers do mention with much reſpect, and in this did never challenge his teſtimony, though a matter of fact, and of that moment, which all the nations about could not but know, and both in the preſent and after ages have the remembrance thereof kept up; ſo that they might eaſily refute ſuch a thing if falſe, and we may judge the *Egyptians*, and many others, could want no good will to put diſgrace on a people they ſo much hated, nor be ignorant of that which *Moſes* publiſhed in his own time, to whoſe works ſome of the ancienteſt heathen writers, do ſhew they have been no ſtrangers. 3. A truth which by *Moſes* was put in record, and delivered to the *Jews* to be kept by them, and their children in in all ſucceeding ages, a record which they did ſo narrowly look to, and had in that reverence and eſteem, that all the ſyllabels and letters thereof were by them numbred, leſt in the ſmalleſt point it ſhould be wronged, yea, were more careful to preſerve it than any nation can be of their moſt concerning rights and charters. 4. A thing whereof the remembrance was yearly from that time celebrated be the *jewiſh church*, whence the inſtitution of the paſſover had its riſe, that deliverance being as a ſign, and ſacramental pledge of that great ſalvation by him who is our true paſſover.

IV. What is held forth in the ſcripture concerning *the more full growth of the Jewiſh Church* that *Jacob* ſhould enjoy a ſcepter, which was foretold by dying *Jacob*, and promiſed once and again to *Abraham* by the Lord, *that his ſeed ſhould be as the ſand of the ſea, and enjoy* Canaan *for an inheritance*, hath it not long ſince been fulfilled? wherein theſe things are clear. 1. That for many ages *Iſrael* did enjoy that land in a moſt flouriſhing condition which doth in part appear from theſe very ruins and deſolation, over which they have ſo long lamented, the glory of *Jeruſalem*, and the *Temple* once ſo famous, which cauſeth ſuch reverence amongſt them to the very rubbiſh thereof at this day. 2. That they were once a people by themſelves, who were not mingled with the nations, but kept at a diſtance by their religion and laws, from the reſt of the world, as a peculiar people to the Lord, is a thing undeniable. 3. That whilſt they enjoyed it, there was a ſingular bleſſing of fruitfulneſs thereon above other places, ſo as that ſmall piece of ground was enough for an innumerable multitude of inhabitants, but is now at this day a barren ſand, an extraordinary curſe no leſs ſeen thereon than the bleſſing was in former times. 4. It is alſo evident that ſomething in the way and carriage of this people, even in their low wandering condition, doth diſcover they have not forgot what once they were, nor their former grandeur and flouriſhing, but ſtill keep by themſelves with ſome reſpect to their own land which their fathers did enjoy.

V. That piece of the ſcripture which did concern *the declining times of the church under the Old Teſtament*, what *Jeremy* foretold of the *babyloniſh* captivity hath now many ages ſince been fulfilled, a truth which we have atteſted by ſacred hiſtory, an hiſtory which doth clearly juſtify it ſelf, and its authority by ſuch convincing marks thereof, that we may ſay, theſe who do ſeriouſly converſe with the word, cannot take up atheiſm without the laying down of reaſon, and putting a force upon their own light. Now as to this particular propheſy we would but ſeriouſly conſider.

1. That which *Jeremy* did foretel anent the captivity, was not its accompliſhment put on record in a book of the church's lamentations? where this truth may be read in her tears, and truly ſuch as ever knew grief in a high meaſure, may eaſily know what is there expreſt to be ſad earneſt, and read the lively motions of an afflicted caſe therein, and beſides, hath not this been

been witneſſed to after ages by a viſible monument, even the deſtruction of the *Temple*, that great and excellent work, which though after rebuilt, did never attain to its former ſplendour. 2. This was a matter of fact of great note, and famous in the time, done in the view of all the nations, a conſiderable piece of the *babyloniſh* conqueſt, yea, that teſtimony the ſcripture beareth to the ſame, was it not a few ages after made publick to other parts of the world by the *Septuagint tranſlation*, ſo that it had been eaſy for *Ptolomy*, or any in that time, to have diſcovered the falſehood of a thing ſo lately done, yet, theſe times nor the moſt profeſſed enemies to the church therein, could not in the leaſt contradict the ſame. 3. Though much of human hiſtory, and theſe records of ancient times that we now have, are both corrupt and defective, yet there wants not ſome conſent, from the ſureſt of theſe, to many of the moſt obſervable things that we have of the hiſtory of the *Old Teſtament*, and as to the certainty of this truth beſides its own authority, we will find ſome of theſe oldeſt writers *Beroſus*, *Herodotus* and *Xenophon*, give ſome light to the ſame, whoſe witneſs the atheiſt cannot challenge; yea, is it not clear that *Joſephus*, not only from ſacred hiſtory, but from theſe old records, and fragments of former times, which were then extant (though ſince have been much loſt) did compoſe his jewiſh antiquities, which give ſo particular a relation of this truth.

VI. What was foretold by *Daniel* concerning *the riſe and fall of the Monarchies*, and change of theſe great empires, which had been ſo ſore a rod upon the church, hath it not many ages paſt had a moſt punctual performance? It is now long ſince that great image ſhewed to the prophet in a viſion, hath been brought down and broken, ſo that ſcarce the toes thereof do now remain, which beſides the ſcripture, may be clearly demonſtrate upon other rational grounds.

1. It being granted that the propheſy of *Daniel* was tranſlated into *Greek*, and laid up in that great library of *Alexandria*, long before much of it was fulfilled, before *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and the riſing of the *Roman Empire*, of which *Porphyrius* could not be ignorant, though all he could anſwer to that evident agreement betwixt this propheſy and the event, was that it muſt have been writ after theſe things were accompliſhed, whilſt it is clear, that a part of the propheſy of *Daniel* which concerned the fourth *Monarchy*, was not even in his times fully made out, yea, we muſt ſay ſomething thereof doth reach to the laſt end of time. 2. It is alſo undeniable that in theſe great revolutions of the monarchies there is a diſcernible conſent and harmony betwixt the ſcripture, and theſe ancient records which we have of theſe times, ſo that not only the things themſelves, but ſome of the moſt obſervable circumſtances thereof which are particularly mentioned by *Daniel*, we may read in *Xenophon*, *Herodotus* and *Diodorus Siculus*. 3. It muſt alſo be granted that ſomething which in *Daniel*'s propheſy would ſeem moſt ſtrange and improbable, ſuch as *Belſhazar*'s death in that very night the hand writing was ſhewed to him, may be particularly underſtood in *Xenophon*'s hiſtory, how *Cyrus* took the advantage of the *Babylonian* ſecurity whilſt they were in the midſt of a ſolemn feaſt, and by diverting the channel of *Euphrates* did enter the city without oppoſition; alſo how that great horn of the high goat was ſo ſuddenly broken, and the coming up of four in his room, which by *Daniel* are expounded of the *Grecian Monarchy*, and the dividing of that *Empire* after *Alexander's* death, is it not punctually held forth by all the hiſtories of that time. 4. Was there not a very convincing appearance of a divine hand, both in the riſe and fall of theſe *Monarchies*, and an extraordinary providence which we cannot but ſee when we read theſe hiſtories

ſtories, that ſurely ſomething above ordinary means, and ſecond cauſes was both in *Cyrus*'s conqueſt againſt the *Babylonians*, and the marvelous ſwift progreſs, and ſucceſs of *Alexander* againſt the *Perſians*.

VII. That which was the great ſcope of all propheſies under the *Old Teſtament*. The *coming of the Meſſias* is ſurely verified, and now many ages paſt hath an accompliſhment, the Lord is come unto his *Temple* even he whoſe day *Abraham*, and the ſaints under the law did long after; this was the moſt happy, and notable *Criſis* that ever the church was under, the great *Epocha*, and period of time from which ſhe doth now reckon, which we know is no fable or cunning device of man, that God was manifeſt in the fleſh, did make his abode for ſome time in the earth, ſuffered at *Jeruſalem* in the view of the world, before many witneſſes, did ariſe from death on the third day, as was ſeen and known by his diſciples thereafter, and having finiſhed the work for which he came was received up again into glory. This is indeed a great truth which concerneth us no leſs to know and be ſure of, than our ſoul is worth, and intereſt through eternity, the fulfilling whereof, beſides the authority of ſacred writ, the witneſs and records of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles of Jeſus Chriſt who teſtify what they certainly knew, is a truth which from ſuch convincing rational grounds may be demonſtrated, that the greateſt height of atheiſm knoweth not how to ſtate it ſelf in a direct oppoſition to the ſame; and truly in this we may ſay the Lord hath ſo tendered the ſtrengthning of his peoples faith and their encouragement, that as it is the moſt concerning promiſe of the ſcripture, on which our whole hope and bleſſedneſs depends, ſo is it alſo moſt clear and conſpicuous in the event: I ſhall but only touch this, whereof ſo much hath been ſaid by others.

1. It is undeniable the *Meſſias* was to come, to whom all the ſacrifices under the law theſe ancient types and ſhadows did clearly point, to whom the prophets bear witneſs, and was the faith of the ancient jewiſh church, of which promiſe they were perſuaded, even whilſt they ſaw it but a far, yea, did embrace and repoſe themſelves thereon, and is there not a moſt clear, and exact protraicture drawn forth under the *Old Teſtament* of the Meſſias, what an one he ſhould be, and by what peculiar characters he ſhould be known, who was to be revealed to *Iſrael*. 2. The ſpecial ſeaſon and period of time wherein Chriſt ſhould come, we find prefixed, and ſhewed to the ancient church, which though under ſome figurative expreſſions ſeemed then dark, yet, was ſo far revealed that upon a diligent ſearch and enquiry, and particular collation of the times, it might be eaſy to diſcern the *Meſſias* coming and near approach, of which ſalvation the prophets did enquire, 1 *Pet.* i. 10. and truly the fall of the *monarchies*, and right uptaking of *Daniel*'s weeks, were ſure and ſolid grounds, for a clear computation there anent; thence was it that ſo general an expectation of the *Meſſias* was among the *Jews*, at that very time when he came, ſo as divers impoſtors did ariſe whom the people were ready to follow, and we ſee with what amazement the *Phariſees* did enquire at *John* the *Baptiſt* if he were the Chriſt or not; yea, *Joſephus* ſheweth how the perſuaſion of this did moſt excite that people to war with the *Romans* from the prophecies they had in holy writ, that from *Judea* ſhould about that time come one who was to be emperor of the world. 3. It is alſo ſure there was ſuch an one, who in the days of *Tiberius*, and under the reign of *Herod* was made manifeſt to *Iſrael*, and came with no outward ſhew and obſervation, but did great and marvelous things before all the people; was crucified at *Jeruſalem*, under *Pontius Pilate*, and notwithſtandſtanding the ignominy of his death, was afterwards adored and followed, both by many of the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*, whoſe doctrine did alſo in ſhort

time ſpread through the world, a truth which the greateſt adverſaries of the goſpel have ever confeſſed, and do atteſt the hiſtory thereof *de facto*, to be a faithful relation, not only *Jews*, but the heathen writers, *Suetonius*, *Tacitus* and *Plinius* the younger that lived near, and ſome of them contemporary with the times of the apoſtles, do witneſs that this *Jeſus* whom the chriſtians worſhip, did truly ſuffer in the time of *Pilate*'s juriſdiction over the *Jews*. 4. Is it not clear how this appearance of Chriſt to the world; did exactly tryeſt with the very time, foretold by the prophets threanent? Was not *Jacob*'s prophecy thus accompliſhed? For until that time it is clear the royal line of *David*'s houſe did not ceaſe, until *Herod* a ſtranger came to reign, by whom it was utterly cut off, and it is manifeſt theſe lxx. weeks mentioned by *Daniel*, muſt be underſtood of years, elſe they could admit no other ſenſe, which reckoning from the decree given out by *Cyrus*, to rebuild the temple, are 490 years, and doth anſwer to the very time of Chriſt's being in the world, and his death, which neceſſarily falls in the laſt of theſe weeks, a thing ſo manifeſt, that *Porphyrus* an avowed enemy to the chriſtian religion could have no anſwer to, but that this propheſy had been deviſed after the event, which I am ſure the *Jews*, though as direct adverſaries would be loth to admit. 5. It is moſt clear that in him who at that time was revealed to *Iſrael*, whom the chriſtian church doth this day worſhip, was exactly accompliſhed whatever was by the prophets told concerning the *Meſſias*, and it is no ſmall advantage for the chriſtian cauſe, that it needs but appeal to theſe records, which have been kept in the hands of her adverſaries, where there is ſo clear a portraicture of him held forth as to his perſon, his way of coming, the place whence, the entertainment he ſhould get, and his death, that I muſt think it a contradiction to reaſon, how men ſhould acknowledge the *Old Teſtament*, and not grant the *New*; ſince it is clear the *Jews* look for no other *Meſſias*, than ſuch an one as is held out by the prophets, and they acknowledge alſo the divine authority of *Eſay*, *Daniel*, *Micah*, *Malachy*, &c. who do by ſuch clear marks point him forth, and ſhew the church how they ſhould know him when he ſhould come; for truly it may thence appear, that it is not more certain the Meſſias ſhould come, than that *Jeſus Chriſt* is he: I would but ſeriouſly ask what do the *Jews* this day miſs in our bleſſed Lord Jeſus, which the *Old Teſtament* alloweth them to expect in the *Meſſias*, is it that he came not with outward ſhew and glory, ſure according to the ſcripture, ſuch an one we ought not to acknowledge, no, ſhould he not be of the ſeed of the woman, *Gen.* ii. who ſhould be born of a virgin as *Eſay* ſheweth, his voice not heard in the ſtreets, deſpiſed and rejected of men, a man of ſorrows; ſuch an one, as was ſhadowed out under the law, who ſhould be made a ſacrifice for ſin, yea, come with no outward pomp, but meek and lowly, and riding upon an aſs, was to be betrayed and ſold, and his price ſhewed by *Zacharias* for thirty pieces; *a crucified dying Chriſt, that ſhould be wounded in the houſe of his friends, and cut off from amongſt the children of his people*, O! can men poſſibly deny ſo clear an accompliſhment of theſe in our bleſſed Lord? 6. Is it not undeniable that the *Jews* now in their preſent caſe, cannot poſſibly expect the accompliſhment of this promiſe; that the *Meſſias* cannot this day come, according to the ſcripture, except they could be put in ſuch a condition, as they were then at Chriſt's coming; certainly it is impoſſible that the *Old Teſtament* be ever fulfilled anent this, if it be not already, can he come forth out of *Bethlehem* whilſt now no ſuch place is known by that name? Can he come into his temple that is utterly deſtroyed, is there not now a ſubverſion of the tribes and the family of *David* not known at this day? Yea, are not the *Gentiles* brought

brought in, whom *Isaiah* sheweth should be gathered under the standard of the Messias? Doth not the daily sacrifice cease? which the *Jews* will confess hath been for many ages, and this was to be after his coming, and I would ask how was that ever fulfilled, that the glory of the second temple should exceed the glory of the first? for this cannot be on the account of its structure or outward magnificence; sure there is nothing wherein this glory could appear, but as it points at Christ, and the breaking up of that glorious light, which was before its destruction. 7. There is an innumerable company who have embraced the gospel, and received the spirit by the ministry thereof since the times of the apostles who have put this seal thereto in all ages, that it is the power, and wisdom of God, and truly without partial respect (which the conscience of the worst of men have been forced to justify) it may be said, these were the excellent of the earth in their time, many of the greatest outward parts and abilities, whose moral integrity and candour was beyond question even with their adversaries, and these both of *Jews* and *Gentiles* of all ranks of men, of all nations and languages, who not only by a naked profession, but by their walk and sufferings, did shew forth the power, and vertue of a crucified Christ, yea, shine as lights whilst they were in the world to the conviction of onlookers, and is not this a convincing witness to the truth of the gospel which its enemies cannot possibly deny. 8. That excellent doctrine delivered to the church in the *New Testament* by Christ and his apostles, doth it not clearly shew whence it is, and witness its own authority? For here we may see a manifest agreement betwixt this and the doctrine of the ancient *jewish* church, that as the five books of *Moses* hold *forth the sum of the gospel, the covenant of grace, and that mystery of salvation by Christ,* so the prophets do carry it on with further clearness, and the *Evangelists* bring forward like an excellent edifice that is founded and advanced in the one, but perfected in the other, all breathing the same spirit with a convincing tendency to the same end, so that we may say the old *Jews* under the law, were in effect christians; and the followers of Christ now under the gospel in some respect are *Jews*, being one in the substantials of their religion; for it is clear that poor apostate people, now in the *jewish* nation, hath wholly departed from their own doctrine, and will not come to the light that they may be judged according to the *Old Testament*; now in this I would seriously attest the adversaries of the gospel if paganism, the *Turks Alcoran*, or *jewish Talmud* hold forth any such doctrine or rule, as that which the christian religion doth, such pure and excellent precepts to restrain the inordinancy of corrupt affection backed with arguments becoming an immortal soul, a doctrine so sincere, solid and rational, so consistent with it self, and agreeable to the true scope and drift thereof, which holds forth, the most exquisite rule of perfection, for men to press after, yea, where every page and line breatheth forth holiness towards God, and righteousness and humanity towards man. 9. I shall add, these clear convincing evidences of the truth of the gospel, which did attend the first publishing thereof were so evident and undeniable a seal from the Lord as may force the greatest atheist to silence, for. 1. They were *Jews* as much concerned in the religion of their fathers as any, who did first publish the gospel, none more zealous according to the law than *Paul* was before his conversion, none also could challenge their driving an outward interest hereby, since persecution and bonds, yea, greatest hazard was that which they could expect. 2. It is clear they walked by no rule of human policy, nor these ordinary ways of insinuation, which the world doth use to engage men, and make a party to themselves, but did deliver the truth, truth most repugnant to the flesh, and that interest, with greatest

greateſt candour and ſimplicity, though likewiſe with a convincing authority and confidence, yea, came with a meſſage to the world, which had no other convoy, or perſuading argument, than the evidence of its own truth, but withal, ſuch a power accompanying the ſame, before which men could not ſtand. 3. What is publiſhed concerning Chriſt by the Evangeliſts, the great works he did, his dying at *Jeruſalem* with all the ſtupendious circumſtances thereof, and ſigns from heaven, was not a thing done in a corner, but in the publick view of men, which in theſe days was moſt notable and famous, but yet there cannot be produced one contradictory teſtimony to the truth of theſe relations, by an adverſary of the goſpel, either at that time, or ſince; ſure the world wanted no malice, and theſe great things were early publiſhed by the Evangeliſts and apoſtles, whilſt many of that generation were alive, yet, it is clear, though in a matter of that concernment, which made then ſo great a noiſe, and was at that time putting the earth all in a flame, none was found, either amoug *Jews* or *Gentiles*, who could or durſt put forth a manifeſt to diſcover the leaſt cheat or falſhood, in theſe things atteſted in the hiſtory of the goſpel. 4. Whatever different parties and ſects did break up with the firſt time of the church, to oppoſe the truth in other things, yet, in this they had all one conſent, that he who was crucified at *Jeruſalem*, was the Meſſias and Chriſt, which truly did witneſs the clear irreſiſtible manifeſtation of this truth in theſe times, ſince, if there could have been the leaſt ground to challenge any impoſture or deceit, in this great foundation of the chriſtian faith, it is more than probable, theſe bitter contentions followed with ſuch animoſity and heat, and irritation of theſe whom the apoſtles and church in that time did with much zeal, and ſharpeſt cenſures purſue, would have engaged them to put all the diſgrace upon the truth which they could, if they might have had where to faſten their teeth, I would further add, that even the arguments and objections, which the adverſaries of the goſpel could ever bring to oppoſe the ſame, are indeed a convincing witneſs and confirmation, and ſhew how little they could any way ſay, in giving their malice a vent, we find that abſurd allegiance of the *Jews* that the great works Chriſt did in the days of his fleſh, were by ſteeling the name *Jehovah* out of the temple, which they alledge he ſewed up in his thigh, which truly needeth no further refutation than the reciting thereof, and here they are even forced to witneſs the truth of theſe relations held forth by the Evangeliſts as to the matter of fact, which we find alſo theſe later atheiſts ſuch as *Vanninus*, *Cardan*, &c. dare not challenge or debate, only they would aſcribe theſe great works which Chriſt then wrought, to the influence of the ſtars, a challenge ſo abſurd, that needs no other anſwer but to relate it.

VIII. We have that remarkable prophecy of *The incoming of the Gentiles*, a truth indeed great and marvelous, which as it is expreſly held forth in the *Old Teſtament*, yea, is there mentioned, *Iſa.* liv. 1, 2. *Iſa.* lx. 3. 9. is a thing ſo clearly now written forth in the event, that I am ſure, the greateſt atheiſts can have no ſhift here, that in this ſtrange work of God about his church; the ſcripture hath an undeniable accompliſhment. Now to clear this let us but conſider.

1. That for many ages this truth anent the incalling of the *Gentiles* was ſealed up in a prophecy, a thing ſo great, and aſtoniſhing to the ancient jewiſh church that they could not well comprehend the ſame, until once the event brought it forth, for this was indeed a myſtery hid from ages, how the *Gentiles* ſhould be fellow-heirs of the ſame body, and partakers of the promiſe in Chriſt, when the bounds and extent of the church did not exceed *Judea* that ſmall incloſure, whilſt the whole world beſide, did lie buried like an outfield

in

in dark paganism for it is well known that the most pleasant places of *Africa*, *Asia* and *Europa*, where afterwards many famous churches were, within these 1600 years was but a savage wilderness, *Britain*, *Germany* and *France*, did then worship the sun and stars, they sacrificed to the Gods of the heathens, yea, these eastern parts, on which the sun did first rise, did not then know the God of *Israel*, a truth which not only the *Roman* and *Grecian* histories, but the records of particular nations, can clearly attest. 2. It is clear that this propheſy was not held forth in a general; but we find the time also prefixed (with other special circumstances) when it should have its accomplishment at the appearing of the Messias, he should be revealed to *Israel*, before which time a bar was drawn in the way of the nations, and a wall of partition betwixt them and the church, until he stand up who should hold forth an ensign to the people, and gather the *Gentiles* under his standard, which *Esay* doth clearly shew, *Es.* xi. 10. xxxiv. 1, 2. lx. 1, *&c. and then must the mountains flow down at his presence, nations be born at once; yea, the light break forth to the* East *and the* West, *then should the children of the desolate be more than of the married wife*, when this time, even the set time for the *Gentiles* is once come; and it may be very convincing, which is most observable, that notwithstanding of a more flourishing condition of the *jewish* church in former ages, when her grandeur and prosperity was not tempting, and the neighbourhood and commerce which the nations about had with that people, yea, though by the captivity they were scattered among the *Persians* and *Babylonians*, yet was there no such stir, or change of the world, until the appointed time once came. 3. It may be easy to prove the event of this propheſy, and its manifest accomplishment, even at the time thereof, for this men cannot deny, that the Lord did visit the *Gentiles* with the knowledge of his truth, which then caused such a change in the earth, as a great part of it hath been brought from heathnish idolatry to worship the God of *Israel*, and such who once were strangers and aliens, now made to profess the same faith (as to the substance thereof) of the ancient *jewish church*; sure this truth needs not want a witness, whilst nations and much of the known world have been for so long a time, and yet to this day are a visible proof thereof, a truth of such concernment that in former ages made a great and stupendious change upon the face of the earth, so that not only an innumerable company out of all nations and languages, but the generality, the very complex body of kingdoms and nations can bear witness thereto, and now the gospel hath been preached through much of the world, yea, we may say, a few parts thereof, where there hath not been some face of a church, though the promise hath not yet had its full accomplishment, but we wait for (according to the scripture) a more flourishing time, and great harvest among the nations, when *Israel* shall be gathered, how ever it is sure the Lord hath in a great part fulfilled this his promise, so that the church might then with astonishment cry out, who hath begotten all these children, who are these that flee as a cloud, like the doves to their windows? O blessed day, in which the light did first break up on the poor off-spring of *Japhet* who then dwelt in the shadow and region of death. O blest day that brought salvation with it to the *Gentiles*, wherein the Lord did visit these dark places of the earth, which were full of the habitations of cruelty, I think the sense of so great a mercy, should never let us want an errand for giving thanks, yea, put much to silence our other complaints. 4. It is not only as to the time, but these very places of the earth which *Esay* and other of the prophets did particularly point at, this promise had an exact accomplishment? For it is this day manifest the *Isles* which we find so frequently mentioned,

that *theſe ſhould wait for his* law, and *the uttermoſt parts of the earth, whence he ſhould bring the daughter of his diſperſed*, may give a clear commentary upon the ſame, from what the Lord hath done to *Britain* and *Ireland*, with other remote parts of the earth, yea, have not the *Æthiopians* been made to ſtretch out their hands, even in theſe ſun-burnt places of *Africk*, hath not Chriſt alſo had a conqueſt, where many a black-a-more was through grace made as the ſnow of *Salmon*, and *the feathers of a dove*, ſo that it is clear how theſe particular places, which were ſo oft pointed at by the prophets have been viſited by the goſpel, and fallen to the ſhare of the church. 5. This change which by the incoming of the *Gentiles* to the church was wrought upon the earth, is a thing ſo great and aſtoniſhing, that were it ſtill in the promiſe, and this not yet fulfilled, it would truly ſtagger our faith, how ſuch a thing ſhould ever come to paſs, and is there not here a miracle, that the world cannot poſſibly deny? Even this great work of God in bringing in of the *Gentiles*, which without an extraordinary power, could not be effectuated, if men will conſider. Firſt, That ſwift progreſs which then the goſpel had, how it did run, and was glorified through the furtheſt parts of the earth, and like a lightning break forth from one place to another, of that in the apoſtle's time, the ſcripture doth ſhew, how moſt of the conſpicuous provinces of *Aſia*, had received the goſpel, and *Tertullian* who lived in the ſecond century, in his book *contra judæos* doth there witneſs how many nations, and theſe moſt remote from other, *Parthians*, *Medes*, *Armenia*, *Phrygia*, *Cappadocia*, *Pontus* and *Pamphilia*, with much of *Egypt*, and diverſe parts of *Africk*, beſides *Rome*, *Spain*, and other places of *Europe*, were in his time almoſt wholly chriſtian; for it is indeed clear that the bounds of the church was then of a larger extent than it is now at this day. 2. It is alſo undeniable that in this ſolemn day of the goſpel's ſpreading amongſt the nations, ſuffering and perſecution did all that time attend the church, yea, in ſuch a meaſure that as the writers of theſe times do witneſs neither famine, peſtilence, nor the ſword, did deſtroy ſo many of the world, as then were of chriſtians in the two firſt centuries, put to death for adhering to the truth, and it is clear, that this great work of God in ſuch a ſwift ſpreading of the church, was moſt diſcernible in theſe times of hotteſt perſecution, yea, then was her moſt effectual growth and increaſe, which upon her getting ſome reſt, and beginning to flouriſh with external peace, was at a viſible ſtand. 3. How marvelous a thing was this, to be brought about, if we conſider the many different languages, that did then ſtop correſpondence between the church and the reſt of the earth, for how could the truth thus ſpread among the nations, yea, in ſuch remote places of the world churches be planted by the apoſtles, and have the ſcripture tranſlated, and made legible to them without that extraordinary gift of tongues, which for that end was then given from the Lord? Sure beſide ſacred authority anent this, reaſon may convincingly witneſs to the world the truth of ſuch a miracle. 4. How ſtrange and wonderful a change was this, that in ſo ſhort a time the goſpel ſhould thus enlighten, and put ſuch a luſtre on the moſt rude and ſavage places of the earth, where ſcarce humanity had been, and bring them from the condition of beaſts to men, ſhould thus tame and civilize the greateſt *Barbarians*, and cauſe the lion to lie down with the lamb, yea, by the preaching of that goſpel, and of a crucified Chriſt, which as it was to the *Jews* a ſtumbling block, ſo to the *Greeks* fooliſhneſs. And in a word, was not this indeed a miracle how in a matter of ſuch high concernment as that wherein mens ſoul and everlaſting intereſt lay, they ſhould be turned off their old way and religion, in which they and their fathers had been

ſo

ſo long rooted, and that a little ſpark, which did break up in *Judea*, ſhould bring down the idols of the nations, and burn up their temples.

Alaſs that there is ſo little of a large heart, of that primitive zeal and fervour this day among chriſtians for the enlargement of the church, that ſuch merchants are now rare who would venture out to trade with other parts, for this excellent ware, the merchandize whereof is better than of gold; O that in theſe parts where the truth is known and profeſſed, the Lord would raiſe up men of ſuch a ſpirit, and ſuch a magiſtrate, who would make it their work, and lay down ſolid grounds how to advance the kingdom of Chriſt in the dark places of the earth, and reckon their intereſt in a foreign plantation upon the account of the goſpel, no leſs than one on the account of trade; we would pray, and yet hope for this.

IX. What we find foretold by *Daniel*, yea, by Chriſt himſelf anent *the deſtruction of* Jeruſalem, *and ceaſing of the Jewiſh daily ſacrifice with the rejection of that people*, *Dan.* xii. 11. *Matt.* xxiv. 2. hath many ages paſt come to paſs, wherein the world may ſee how clearly the event doth anſwer this prophecy, for it is manifeſt.

1. That this is a truth which doth need no other witneſs, than the ſcattered remnant, and deſolate ruins of that once flouriſhing church and nation of the *Jews*, which we ſee with our eyes at this day, whoſe preſent ſtate is ſo great a monument of divine judgment, ſo clear a witneſs to the ſcripture, that I think men cannot look thereon, if they be in any meaſure ſerious, but muſt have ſuch a conviction. 2. What hath befallen this people may it not be an aſtoniſhment to the world in all ſucceeding ages? a ſtroke that hath put them in a more ſad condition than any nation, or people we ever yet heard of, that caſt them out of their own land, ſcattered them as vagabonds through the earth, ſo that theſe many ages they have had no ſcepter nor lawgiver, no piece of the earth they can call their own, but at the mercy, and arbitrary diſpoſal of every place they reſide in, no priviledge or liberties but a naked permiſſion to brook their lives and eſtates during the pleaſure of theſe under whom they get ſhelter, a people put by themſelves with a viſible mark of divine wrath upon them, like a beacon ſet up for all the nations to look on, even theſe who were once eminently owned of the Lord, who was known in their palaces for a refuge, yea, it is very manifeſt that no ſtir or eſſay that ever they made for their relief, but was ſtill to their further ruin, and found God's hand viſibly croſs to them therein; ſure *Ammianus Marcellinus*, a heathen writer did intend no teſtimony to the chriſtian cauſe in relating that ſtrange paſſage which near his time fell out; how the *Jews* by *Julian*'s warrant and permiſſion, did attempt to build the *Temple* again, but a fire breaking up from the foundation thereof, which deſtroyed many of the workmen, forced them with terror to deſiſt. 3. Muſt it not be ſome ſtrange and dreadful provocation, beyond the ſin of their forefathers, whereat ſo ſtrange and unuſual a ſtroke doth point? Whilſt it is clear that notwithſtanding frequent Idolatry, and departing from God when they were at that height in wickedneſs to offer up their children to *Molech*, and ſet up altars in the groves, to reject the meſſage of the prophets, and thruſt ſome of them in a dungeon, yet, were only puniſhed with lxx years captivity, and after by God's very immediate hand brought again, theſe who had taken them captive concurring with them to rebuild the temple: But now how long and dark hath their night been ſince this judgment came on them, and though they could not theſe many ages charge themſelves with Idolatry, yet no ſaviour or deliverer hath been raiſed up, no prophet ſent forth, no ſign or appearance at this day of relief, now for theſe 1600 years, yea amidſt theſe frequent changes and

reſo-

reſolutions that have been in the world no change in their condition, ſure if that people were in ſpeaking terms with their conſciences, this might put them to a ſtrange demur, what ſhould be the cauſe if they be not guilty of killing the *Meſſias*, and that blood purſuing them; what atrocious provocation beyond others they can condeſcend on, for which the Lord doth ſo long and ſo ſore by ſuch an unuſual, and unheard of ſtroke thus contend. 4. What a marvelous concurrence of providence, and convincing appearance of a divine hand was in this judgment, the beſieging of *Jeruſalem* by the *Romans*, tryſted with the very time of the paſſover, whilſt ſo great a confluence of the people from all parts of the land were there on that account, that both ſword, and famine might contribute their help to deſtroy; what unreaſonable and aſtoniſhing obſtinacy againſt all offers of peace, and the moſt preſſing inſinuations thereof which *Titus Veſpaſian* made, even whilſt their ruin was otherwiſe unevitable, an unheard of ſtrife where the enemy did contend to ſave, but they to undoe themſelves, now judicially hardened, under moſt remarkable prodigies, and warnings which they had of that approaching deſolation, divided wholly amongſt themſelves, yea, ſo cruel one upon another within, that their adverſary without could not but look thereon with compaſſion. O what a ſtroke was this wherein greateſt atheiſts would grant a fatality, for indeed men cannot conſider the ſame without acknowledging a divine hand and ſomething above ordinary means and cauſes, where all did thus meet together in a ſolemn try'ſt to accompliſh that peoples ruin. 5. But it is here we may ſee a ſingular providence of God for his church, that theſe who of all the world are moſt violent enemies to the chriſtian truth, are alſo a moſt convincing witneſs to the ſame, whilſt, firſt, theſe do clearly atteſt the ſcripture (which is our alone charter) the divine authority of *Moſes* and the prophets, the true copys whereof, they did moſt tenderly preſerve whatever abſurd gloſſes ſome of their Rabbies have thereon; yea, durſt never offer in the leaſt to vitiate the original, but have had the ſame tranſmitted, ſtill from one age to another, to which records that are this day in their hand, the chriſtian church can with much confidence appeal, and demonſtrate from the *Old Teſtament* the undoubted truth of the *New*. Yea, in this we may appeal the atheiſt to his conſcience that the ſcripture is no impoſture, or any cunning device of chriſtians, which is ſo far witneſſed even by the greateſt adverſary, and maligners of the chriſtian religion. 2. That ſtrange induration of the *Jews*, their unreaſonable rejecting of the truth, who after ſo long a time cannot ſee the cauſe which is moſt diſcernible in their ſtroke. O is not this alſo a moſt convincing ſeal to the ſcripture, and clear fulfilling thereof, there is a vail over their mind as the Apoſtle ſheweth, whilſt they read the law, judicially ſmitten by the Lord with blindneſs, that they cannot ſee until once this vail be taken off, and truly we may ſay there is nothing in their judgment more ſtrange and aſtoniſhing than ſuch a continued obſtinacy againſt the truth, how they ſhould be thus dark in the noon-day, but that herein the ſcripture is fulfilled; ſo that we may even turn a poiſon unto an antidote.

X. That which is ſo expreſly foretold in the *New Teſtament*, yea, is the great drift of the Prophecies thereof, *The coming of* Antichriſt, *and revealing of the man of ſin to the world*, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 3. 4. 7. 8, 9. hath long ſince been accompliſhed, wherein we may ſay the wonderful correſponding of the event with the prophecy is ſo clear, that this truth is now as plain, and obvious as once it was dark to the church, theſe things being undeniable.

1. How the ſpirit of God in the ſcripture hath been in a more than ordinary way particular, to point antichriſt forth by ſuch notour marks, and characters, that after ages may know him, if they will not ſhut their eyes,

I con-

I confeſs it is not ſtrange the popiſh party ſhould ſeal up the ſcripture, and forbid the ordinary reading of it, ſince the breaking forth of that light would ſoon make their kingdom dark, for if men would but ſet the hiſtory of the church ſince the times of the apoſtles, over-againſt the ſcripture, and make uſe of that notable key for opening up the prophecies of the *New Teſtament*, it ſhould be then eaſy to know, the *antichriſt* is ſurely come, and who this is, and herein doth the Lord's tender reſpect to his church appear, that he doth not only in a very ſolemn manner forewarn men, anent this great trial, and and as it were by the ſound of a trumpet give an alarum, that ſuch an adverſary was coming, yea of the time thereof, but doth alſo make ſo clear a diſcovery of the whole fabrick, riſe, and progreſs of that party, with ſuch particular circumſtances and differencing characters from any other enemy of the church, as may render the world moſt inexcuſable, if they will needs daſh on that rock, whereon the ſcipture hath ſet ſo conſpicuous a beacon. 2. That this prophecy ſhould now want an accompliſhment or *antichriſt* be yet to come, is a thing is moſt repugnant to ſacred truth, ſince it is ſure, that myſtery of iniquity in the times of the apoſtles did begin to work, and who then for a time withheld his coming, the heathen empire of *Rome* hath long ſince been taken out of the way, which cauſed ſome chriſtians in theſe days wiſh the ſtanding, and continuance of that empire, from the terror they had of that adverſary, who according to the word, they knew was to fill his room, yea, do we not find the church's trial from *antichriſt* ſhould be the moſt ſore, and laſting trial of the church under the *New Teſtament*, which after her begun breathing from heatheniſh perſecution, was to continue for many ages wherein the word is moſt expreſs, and clear, that the riſe and fall of this enemy ſhould be gradual, and not at once, whoſe beginning and firſt appearance might be traced to the firſt times of the church, and his cloſe, and final ruin near the ſecond coming of Chriſt, by the brightneſs whereof he ſhall be deſtroyed, and therefore, this is ſo much the ſubject of the prophecies of the *New Teſtament*, the great intent, and ſcope of the revelation of *John*, in which, the true ſtate of the chriſtian church, with the various changes of her condition, even from the opening up of the firſt ſeal to the blowing of the laſt trumpet, is particularly held forth, and there may we almoſt trace the ſteps of the riſe and fall of that man of ſin. 3. That ſuch an one as the ſcripture points forth, doth moſt fully anſwer to all theſe marks which are there given of *antichriſt*, hath come and been revealed to the world, is a thing ſo very manifeſt that except they will needs force their light, and conſcience, it cannot but be beyond queſtion, and debate, even ſuch an one whoſe coming ſhould be after the working of Satan with all power, ſigns, and lying wonders, forbidding to marry, and to abſtain from meats which God had appointed, who ſitteth in the temple of God, having a name full of blaſphemy, and doth exalt himſelf above all that is called God, who bewitcheth the kings, and great men of the earth with his enchantments, yea, even by his livery may he be known that he moſt uſually hath ſcarlet, and purple, which I think truly marvelous how particularly theſe are mentioned in the ſcripture; and in a word, ſuch an one whoſe traffick, and merchandize, is not only gold, and ſilver, but the ſouls of men who ſhould be drunk with the blood of the ſaints, and *Martyrs* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, under whoſe reign the church muſt flee to the wilderneſs, and there be latent for a long time, and his ſeat, that city is ſituate upon ſeven hills, even that great city doth rule over the kings of the earth. O ſtrange how men can acknowledge this for the ſcripture of God, and yet not ſee it fulfilled before their eyes, and that there is ſo vive an image, and portraicture of *antichriſt* there held forth, ſuch peculiar characters which do

convincingly point at the pope, and popiſh hierarchy, yea could anſwer to no other adverſary which Chriſt ever had under the *New Teſtament* either *Pagan* or *Mahometan*, and yet ſo much of the world doth not know him when he is before their eyes. 4. It is clear that no age ſince *antichriſt* was revealed, did altogether want ſome witneſs, to point him forth, even in the darkeſt times, many of whom loved not their lives unto the death, that they might ſeal this truth, and it may be a queſtion if more of the blood of the ſaints was ſhed under heathens than in after times under *antichriſt*, yea though we had not ſuch expreſs marks to diſcover him from the word, it may be eaſy for men to judge, who that is, who is this day ſo directly oppoſite to *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the great deſign of the goſpel, that aſſumes to himſelf what is alone due to God, to forgive ſin, and be worſhipped with religious adoration, doth challenge a magiſterial power, and ſupremacy, over the whole church as its head, a ſtile too great for any of the angels, who maketh void the merit of Chriſt, and layeth down a way of life, and ſalvation, on the ſame terms that it ſtood in the covenant of works, doth deſtroy the great intent of the goſpel, and in effect denyeth *Jeſus Chriſt* to have come in the fleſh, who ſetteth heaven upon ſale for money, and permitteth none to periſh and go to hell but the poor; doth diſpenſe with groſſeſt acts of ſin and the expreſs commands of the Law-giver, moral prohibitions void by his authority, yea, halloweth the very ſtews, and moſt horrid acts of uncleanneſs, taketh on him to change the condition of the dead, and enſure to their friends the happy ſtate of their ſouls, if they will make large offerings on that account, O! who is this, is not that *antichriſt*, whoſe way doth ſtate him in ſuch direct terms of oppoſition to Chriſt? 5. Have we not cauſe to wonder no leſs at the ſtrange induration and blindneſs of the popiſh party, than of the *Jews*, that whilſt the one doth confeſs the *Old Teſtament*, and yet knowerh not Chriſt, the other ſhould grant the truth of the *New Teſtament*, and not know *antichriſt*, that he is come, even he after whom a great piece of the world, for theſe many ages, hath been wondering? ſure ſo clear an agreement betwixt this prophecy and the event may not only put this beyond debate, but leave a conviction upon the greateſt atheiſts, of the truth, and divinity of the ſcripture? For whatever former times might pretend ignorance whilſt this myſtery was but working, now when the man of ſin hath come to his full height, and ſtature, and ſo clearly revealed by the light of the goſpel, it taketh away all excuſe, and I profeſs in theſe latter times, I cannot ſee how one can be a knowing papiſt, and not an atheiſt alſo.

(¶) I know it is a ſore judgment on men, who will not receive the truth, that the diſcovery thereof ſhould be their pain and torment, and I am ſure whatever advantages or outward peace, followers of *antichriſt* have this day, they can have no ſound ſleep, whilſt the light with that clearneſs doth ſhine, that they can neither ſtand before it, nor yet flee and eſcape, where their conſcience will not follow; but O here is the ſcipture evidently fulfilled, and their judgment ſo far begun, as it is held forth, *Rev.* xvi. that the greater diſcovery the light makes, the more they ſhould rage, and in fury riſe againſt it; for the heat of this cannot but ſcorch where it doth not warm, there is no help where God doth judicially harden men, no blindneſs like that where they ſhut their eyes, and the righteous God makes it their plague by putting his ſeal to it: however wiſdom muſt be juſtified of her children, the truth cannot looſe its ear and even when its effects are ſad and judicial, for it is a ſweet ſavour to God in them who periſh: It is truly a ſad ſight, and there ſeems no acceſs to convince, where malice at the way of the Lord turns men mad, yea cruel againſt themſelves; but ſince the *popiſh church* do's not avowed-

avowedly deny the ſcriptures divinity of the *New Teſtament* and *propheſies* thereof (which is the great advantange we require to have its authority admitted) and their religion brought to this teſt, which is the alone rule of all true religion, and ſince they muſt grant that to be joyned with *Antichriſt*, or partaker in ſuch a way, is moſt dreadful, and involves them under the greateſt of judgments, for it is a matter of no leſs weight than an eternal ſalvation or damnation; yea, ſince this concerns miniſters of the goſpel, as one ſpecial piece of their work now in the laſt times to bear witneſs againſt *Antichriſt* (that great, we muſt ſay the greateſt adverſary which Chriſt ever had in the earth) to warn and purſue, without ceaſing, this call, whatever ſucceſs it have, that men would come out of *Babylon*, and haſte from under an approaching wrath and vengeance, which on ſome other ground than appearance we are ſure now makes haſte; I would here in behalf of the truth offer ſome queries on this ſubject (beſides any thing hath been already mentioned) and herein appeal the adverſary to the ſcripture of God, that great and uncontroverted judge to their conſcience, yea, to the ſober and retired thoughts of ſuch, who are under any awe or impreſſion of a Deity, when they are alone with themſelves, if this ſo remarkable a propheſy anent the *Antichriſt*, and his coming be now not clearly verified, that men may ſee him with their eyes, or elſe muſt ſhut them at ſuch a ſight.

1. Is there not a very full and particular diſcovery which the ſcripture gives of this great adverſary both in his riſe, growth, his reign and fall, and not by a paſſing word, whom the apoſtle, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 3. 4. points out by ſuch peculiar marks, whom *John* does deſcribe and difference from all other *Antichriſts*, that were only to be his fore-runners and ſhews him a more noted and principal adverſary of Chriſt above others, yea, we have through the whole revelation moſt clearly diſcovered under different ſtiles, what he ſhould be, and what a ſore and long trial the chriſtian church was to have under his reign, I profeſs when I read the ſcripture, and there ſee ſo expreſs and clear a forewarning which many ages before we have anent the coming of this adverſary, with ſuch peculiar diſtinguiſhing circumſtances and marks, as are at this day moſt exactly verified in the event, I am conſtrain'd to admire at ſo convincing and unanſwerable a witneſs to the ſcriptures divinity, and muſt think it ſtrange how men at ſuch a rate can wreſtle againſt the truth, except by getting a victory over their conſcience and putting the light in fetters, whilſt they own theſe propheſies of the *New Teſtament* to be of divine verity, which they ſo evidently diſtort againſt the clear ſenſe and meaning thereof; yea, do adventure ſuch a commentary on the ſame, that manifeſtly deſtroys the text. 2. Can you poſſibly expect *Antichriſt*'s coming to the world now according to the ſcripture, if he be not already revealed, when his forerunners were ſo many ages before, even in the times of the apoſtles, to ſhew he was then coming, I muſt ask, if this adverſary ſhould this day begin to appear, could you judge this is he, or reconcile ſuch a contradiction; how he is now breaking up who was beginning to diſcover himſelf 1500 years ago, for it is ſo long ſince the apoſtle ſhewed this myſtery of iniquity was working, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 7. which clearly points at *Antichriſt*, who then was hatching, though not on ſuch a growth and aſcendant as after; and could he be yet latent, yet in the bud, hath there been no further advance after ſo many ages, hath this myſtery yet not wrought it ſelf above ground? O where hath he been? that ſuch a working thing, ſo dreadful a ſpark could keep ſo many ages under aſhes, and to flame, no fire perceived? for it is ſure if he was then at work, he hath not yet ceaſed; yea, if you admit the ſcripture, is not the riſing of the *Turkiſh Empire*, in the order of the trumpets clearly after the revealing of the

anti-

Antichriſt, and this horrid ſcourge held forth, *Rev.* ix. 20. as a remarkable judgment from the Lord, on the chriſtian world then turn'd *Antichriſtian* for their idolatry, worſhipping of images, *&c.* which was not brought into the church till the man of ſin was towards his height. 3. Is not this unanſwerably manifeſt that he who did with-hold, and as a bar reſtrained *Antichriſt*'s coming for a time, cannot now be ſtanding in the way? You ſee the ſcripture ſhews expreſly there is a bar muſt be removed, and then ſhould this man of ſin be revealed, and this cannot be doubted but that ſome temporal power was hereby meant which did then forceably withſtand as the original word κατέχων imports, for it is very clear whilſt the *Roman Empire* was heathen, he could not brook *Rome*, or as a *Monarch* have his ſeat in that city with ſeven hills, he could not then both ſit in the temple of God, and have the kings of the earth to give their power with conſent to him: Now let me but appeal men to their reaſon and judgment, if any ſuch bar could be yet ſtanding after ſo great, yea, ſuch innumerable mutations and changes of the world? when many ages ſince, there have been ſuch various ſucceſſions of ſtates and kingdoms, and a wearing out of greateſt families, how any temporal power could be ſince the days of the apoſtles a continued let in the way of the adverſary. 4. This query I would ſeriouſly offer, if ſuch a party can be found at this day, to whom all the marks of *Antichriſt* held forth by the ſcripture, do truly agree, could you then deny he is come, if ſo be you look for ſuch an *Antichriſt*, and under that cogniſance, as the *Holy Ghoſt* points him forth in the word? O will you be ſo much in earneſt with your conſcience as to ſuffer the truth come this near, that you may impartially judge what is there of the propheſies that concerns *Antichriſt* coming in the world, which is not now verified in the event, before your eyes, and admit the ſcripture but judge therein; whether there is any ſuch particular diſtinguiſhing badge and mark, held forth in that bleſſed record for his diſcovery, which does not convincingly quadrate with the *Pope* and his followers. 5. I ſhall in this alſo appeal to your conſcience, if there be now, or hath been under the *New Teſtament* an other party, or ſuch an adverſary to the church of Chriſt, to whom theſe diſtinguiſhing characters of *Antichriſt* could agree, ſuch an one who ſhould be no open adverſary, but ſit in the temple of God under the veil of a friend with a ſhew of great wonders and miracles, and yet under that ſhew exalt himſelf againſt God: I know you will deny that this hath a clear reſpect to the *popiſh* party, or is juſtly applicable to them, but I am ſure if without a prejudicate byaſs, you would ſeriouſly judge, and abſtract from application, in this you could not deny an aſſent that ſuch a party, whoſoever he be, bears that great badge of *Antichriſt*, in exalting himſelf againſt God; who as a friend doth aſſume theſe titles, only due and competent to the glorious God, and to the Mediator, to be head and chief doctor of the catholick church, and alledges her for his ſpouſe, who challenges an infinite power by making uſe of that, *Mat.* xxviii. 18, *All power is given unto me, &c.* which that book intituled *Pontifical ceremonies* does aſſert, *Lib.* i. *fol.* 36. who aſſumes an authority to bind mens conſcience by his law, and to free their conſcience from theſe laws which are divine and unchangeable, who appoints divine worſhip and adoration to creatnres, by directing prayers to them, does ſubject the faith of the church to the determination of a man, in which as infallible, all muſt reſt, is not that a dethroning of him, who is the great prophet and teacher of his church, yea, a making his authority void; now beſide theſe diſtinguiſhing characters, which the ſcripture ſo expreſly gives of *Antichriſt*; are not theſe alſo ſo notour and plain that I think it ſtrange how men can have their reaſon and judgment in exer-

ciſe, and not know to whom they belong: I mean the forbidding of marriage, and the uſe of meats which the apoſtle holds forth, 1 *Tim.* iv. 3. and *Rev.* xviii. 13. you have there a merchandiſe with the ſouls of men, and O can any be in the dark who theſe are, who have ſuch a peculiar traffick with this war, by redeeming ſouls for money, and making a ſale of pardons and indulgences which concern mens ſouls; I ſhall add that likewiſe, *Rev.* ix. 20. the worſhipping of idols of gold and ſilver, and herein crave the world to be judge, yea, can appeal ſome of their own greateſt writers, if this be not both the doctrine and the practice of the *Romiſh church*, which one of the moſt learned among them does expreſly aſſert, that the images of the *Trinity* are not ſet up for a ſhew, but for religious adoration, and is not this a moſt direct making void of the moral law, which ſo expreſly forbids any worſhipping of the inviſible God under the ſimilitude of a corruptible man, or under any viſible repreſentation. 6. Is not this foretold of *Antichriſt*, what a dominion he ſhould have over the kings of the earth, *Rev.* xvii. 18. unto whom they ſhould agree and give their power and kingdoms to ſupport his intereſt; now if this be not convincingly verified, and hath been for many ages in the *Pope*, it is eaſy to judge; and I am ſure his followers would be loath to deny a thing, in which they ſo much boaſt: I confeſs were it not thus foretold by the ſcripture, we could not think it credible, how the kings and great men of the earth ſhould be in ſuch a meaſure bewitched to enſlave themſelves, and their intereſt to that party, and yield to ſo ſtrange a ſubjection under their yoke, it ſeems ſo very irrational, yea, like an infatuation, ſince they cannot but ſee under what a terror he keeps them by his interdictions, by aſſuming a power to looſe ſubjects from any tie to their princes, and thus binding and looſing their conſcience at his pleaſure, what intereſt he hath in their councils, by that ſubtile device of auricular confeſſion, what intolerable homage and ſervice he requires from princes, what vaſt treaſure he draws for ſupport of his hierachy from theſe places where he hath power; yea, what a viſible tendency his actings have to promote a worldly intereſt, and make the great men of the earth dependent on him; how eaſily he can diſpenſe with the greateſt breaches of the moral law, whilſt moſt cruel and inexorable in any thing that copes with his power and ſupremacy: O how aſtoniſhing might this blind devoring of great men both themſelves and their power, to the ſupport of ſuch an intereſt be, if we had not a clear reſolution from the ſcripture, that this is from the Lord, who hath put it in their heart, and ſo far gives them up in his ſecret judgment. 7. I muſt ask, is not that a convincing witneſs to the ſcripture, and a clear argument for the proteſtant reformed church, which you ſo much object againſt her, that her condition for ſo many ages hath been low and abject, and did ſo little appear, whilſt the popiſh intereſt was reſplendent and flouriſhing; for it is ſure ſuch a long continued ſuffering, and latent condition of the church under *Antichriſt* is expreſly foretold, wherein the witneſſes ſhould be put to propheſy in ſackcloth, and the poor woman (which is meant of the church) put to flee to the wilderneſs and be there hid, ſo that you cannot ſay the church, and followers of Chriſt have been more low in theſe worſt and darkeſt times, than the word holds her out to be; yet, hath there been ſtill a ſucceſſion and ſome witneſſes for the truth, and the church thus continued in all theſe times, which as one excellently ſays, was like a freſh river that made her way through that horrid lake of *Antichriſtianiſm* without mixing therewith, and at laſt did break up glorioufly. 8. Is not the *Antichriſt* in a ſpecial way pointed out in the ſcripture by ſome proper mark, ſome viſible ſign and cognizance, which his followers ſhould receive, from differencing them from any other party,

Rev. xiii. 16. now in this I desire the world, and commonest observers, to judge if these many strange ceremonies and rites of the romish church, their distinguishing signs and badges, which they so much own, and indispensibly require as visible characters of their profession, yea, are so peculiar to that party beyond others, do not convincingly quadrate with the scripture herein, and most clearly verifie the same in the event, the world knows, and the ordinary way and practice of these can witness that frequent use (oh a most horrid idolatrous abuse) of the sign of the cross, which not only in a special manner they take as a differencing badge of their party from others, by so frequent a crossing of their forehead and breast, and putting this as their mark on all they baptize, or receive by confirmation, but do ascribe also to it an effective and operative power, and as a charm or magical sign, makes use of it to effect things supernatural, to restrain sin, drive away the Devil; for thus they conjure spirits, thus they wear it in their rings and pendiaries; yea, is it not by them adored and worshiped, and made use of for the blessing and consecration of all other things; sure this can be no matter of debate, since it is so known and obvious, and that it is easy thus to discern a *Roman catholick*, if he but avow his profession, by such a visible sign, and find him but by his mark; which that party does pursue with greatest fervour, and thereby correspond and discover themselves one to another.

I shall further add, is not this the *Antichrist*, whose name must be understood, and reckoned by the number thereof, which is the number of a man, *Rev.* xiii. 18. It is true this seems very dark and mysterious, and instead of a more clear discovery, might rather be judged a drawing a vail over this adversary, but since we have the scriptur's express call and warrant, to make a serious inquiry and search about its meaning, yea, does not only hold it forth as duty, but shews such a thing is attainable and may be understood, I shall desire in humble sobriety, without peremptory asserting, to offer some few thoughts on this scripture, both as to its meaning, and how clearly the man of sin is thus pointed out, and his name made known by the number thereof; anent which I humbly judge (and must therein crave liberty to differ from others, and these whose judgment I most highly respect) that this number as it is here set down is explicatory, and giving as the very key to the church, for opening up the mystery of this name, and of that man of whom also it is the number, and thus shews it is not to be reckoned as the name of a single person, nor is it to be found by *Arithmetical* computation in the numeral letters of a man, but is the name of a *political body*, a name which comprehends a plurality, such as these numerous orders and degrees of the pontifical hierarchy are, and by such a scale, his number does remarkably ascend in so many degrees, until it terminate in a man even in one absolute *Monarch* and universal head, as the very *summa totalis* in whom that whole number resolves, and therefore it is the number of a man; yea, by this reckoning we may thus clearly know, what a man that is, that as he cannot be known, if we take him alone, without respect to a politick body, and the whole complex hierarchy, of which number he is made up, as the constituent parts, we must also understand by this computation, the *Antichrist*, with respect to a long continued series and succession, which here the scripture shews to the church, that he is not a single individual person only, or such a politick body of many numerous degrees, resolving in one head, which should be but for an age, or of a short duration; but that he is an adversary who is to be continued in a numerous succession through a series of many ages; and thus may the man of sin and his name be understood, by this number of which he is made up; now in this, I humbly judge, the scope of the scripture is clear,

clear, in ſetting down ſuch a rule to count *Antichriſt* by his number, and thus does prophetically obviate that great miſtake after ages would fall in, and is to this day entertained, that this adverſary is but one individual perſon, who ſhould get up, and cauſe a remarkable apoſtacy in the church; therefore it is that the world will not know this is he, when they ſee him before their eyes, not conſidering that ſuch a numerous body, and ſucceſſion is contained in his name, from which he cannot be ſeparate.

But for further clearing, I ſhall offer ſome few things to be ſeriouſly conſidered in his reckoning.

1. Here is a number and plurality, by the Holy Ghoſt particularly ſet down, by which *Antichriſt* muſt be known and counted, and the tye is ſo cloſs betwixt him and his number, that both the man, and his name is formally made up thereof. 2. Here is a number, which is not to be ſought after by the ſubtile computations of *Arithmetick*, or any curious inquiry in the numeral letters of a man's name, ſince thus we cannot know the true uſe of chriſtian wiſdom and prudence which the ſcripture requires; yea, it is clear, this way might anſwer ſeveral other names as well as *Latinos*, which could not in an ordinary way be determined, without a pretending to ſome extraordinary revelation, and diſcovery; but here may be judged work for ſpiritual wiſdom, to count this number of *Antichriſt*, and his name, with reſpect to his nature, frame and compoſition. 3. Here is ſuch a number which is all ſummed up in one man, and cannot otherways be counted or underſtood, but as it hath a reſpect to a ſingle perſon, in a continued ſucceſſion wherein it reſolves; now is there not ſuch a number to which the *Pope* ſtands as nearly related, as the total ſum is to theſe degrees, and leſſer numbers of which it is made up? And here is wiſdom, to join aright that man of ſin and his number, and there ſee how exactly they quadrate in the event, and each gives light to an other. 4. We find here a large number, wherein there is a plurality of many different degrees, riſing above others, and is therefore definitly expreſſed by ſo great a number as 666. 5. This is alſo a number (and herein there ſeems clear ground for ſuch a remark) which is moſt unit and compact, with a cloſs concatenation, a remarkable order and riſing from a lower to a higher degree, with a ſpecial ſubordination and dependence on other; yea, is thus knit, that one part comprehends the other; ſuch as is moſt clear and obvious, in that ſubtile politick conſtitution of the *Romiſh ſtate*, and that numerous *hierarchy*, with which this definite number of 666 ſeems marvelouſly to quadrate, whereas by a ſcale of ſo many ſteps and degrees, you may follow up this number, as it were from 6 to 60, *&c.* by *Deans*, *Provincials*, *Generals* of *Orders*, to *Biſhops*, thence *Archbiſhops*, *Primates*, *Patriarchs*, *Cardinals*, until you find all reſolve in one man; who is as ſtraitly related to it as a name can be to ſo many ſyllables whereof it is made up. I know this may ſeem too curious an inquiry, and not ſo ſuiting the gravity and weight of the ſcripture, but ſince the ſpirit of God hath choſen ſuch a definite number by an other, wherein there is ſo ſtrange *an order* and *quadration*, to diſcover that adverſary, and gives us ſuch ground that his number points at his frame and compoſition, I think without any challenge of unſobriety ſuch a remark very ſuitable. 6. Whilſt the ſcripture ſhews, this is the number of a man, and of his name, does it not alſo ſhew it is ſuch a number that lies neareſt *Antichriſt*, and is moſt ſtraitly related to him, and as the formal cauſe does moſt ſpecially concurr in his conſtitution, yea, gives as it were life to that image; now let it be ſeriouſly conſidered what this is, yea, whether that myſtery of *Antichriſtianiſm* does not in a peculiar way lie in his ſupremacy, and being infallible, and the ultimate judge

judge of controverſies, which he claims as abſolute head of the church univerſal, and that fountain whence all theſe degrees of power in the *Romiſh hierarchy* do flow, and in whom they fully terminate; for it is clear thence are all theſe groſs tenets, and corruption in doctrine; thus he moſt directly exalts himſelf againſt God, and puts the Mediator off his throne; thus he does exerciſe authority over mens conſcience; thus antichriſtianiſm, and that avowed oppoſition to Jeſus Chriſt takes life, is nouriſhed and hath its ſtrength, even under theſe wings of his abſolute ſupremacy; now if it be clear, this is the number which lyes neareſt to antichriſt, from which he can no ways be ſeparated, and does moſt formally make up that man of ſin, than by the exerciſe of chriſtian wiſdom may that number, and its true meaning be thence underſtood. 7. Is not this ſuch a number that is peculiarly reſtricted, in a claſs by it ſelf, which the 18th verſe does ſhew, wherein that great bulk of the *Romiſh church* is not to be ſought; for though it is there clear, that ſuch who receive the mark, and by ſome viſible profeſſion own the doctrine of the *Romiſh church*, are of the largeſt extent, and therefore it is ſaid, great and ſmall, rich and poor, muſt come that length, yet as to the number of the beaſt, and of his name, it is expreſſed by its ſelf, and as a higher claſs in which all of the common rank who muſt receive the mark does not fall; but as lying more cloſe and near to antichriſt, is in a peculiar manner reſtricted by a diſtinguiſhing note: which a ſerious ſtudy of that ſcripture will help to clear.

XI. What was propheſied anent *the killing of the witneſſes under antichriſt*, *Rev.* xi. 3. 7, 8. we ſay hath clearly come to paſs, and at this day may read the ſame in the event, for it is manifeſt.

1. That during *antichriſt*'s reign even in the darkeſt times, there wanted not ſome to ſeal the truth, and bear witneſs thereto, both by open confeſſion, and ſuffering on that account, which the church hiſtories can abundantly make out. 2. That during that dark night theſe who did give a teſtimony, and any way appeared againſt the grievous encroachments of *antichriſts* in behalf of down born truth, were put to prophecy in ſackcloth, when there was nothing left, but to weep over the church's ruins, and witneſs their deteſtation, and grief for the growing apoſtacy of ſuch times. 3. It is clear, that as the prophecy doth point at ſome more remarkable ſuffering, and perſecution, which the church was to meet with from *antichriſt*, beyond all it had endured from that adverſary in former ages, yea, a ſpecial permiſſion from the Lord to that party, to vent that party, to vent their rage and cruelty againſt the ſaints, which ſhould fall out after the witneſſes finiſhing their teſtimony, who had been ſo long in an abject low condition, as in ſackcloth propheeied, when *antichriſt* ſhould be at his height, and his kingdom upon the turn, that then muſt this remarkable killing of the witneſſes be accompliſhed; ſo, likewiſe did the event convincingly verify the ſame, for it is known that upon the cloſe of *antichriſt*'s reign, whilſt the truth began to break up, this foreſt ſtorm of perſecution beyond all that had been before, did then break upon the church, even in its budding forth, that we may ſay, that adverſary did not only put forth the outmoſt of his power and rage againſt the ſaints, but ſeemed in ſome meaſure to bring his cruel deſigns to paſs, which the dreadful maſſacres in *France*, *Province*, and the valleys of *Piemont*, the ſore and violent perſecution of the *church*, through the *Netherlands*, under the *Duke* of *Alva*, and in *England* by *Queen Mary*, in *Germany* after the defeat of the *Duke* of *Saxony*, and *Landgrave* of *Heſſe* can clearly witneſs. 4. Is it not alſo clear, how this remarkable ſtorm, and cutting down of the ſaints, over whoſe dead bodies their adverſaries did rejoice, was according to this prophecy to be previous to

ſome eminent enlargements, and reviving of the church, which did accordingly fall out in the event like a reſurrection of the witneſſes from the dead, to the aſtoniſhment of the world, that immediately followed upon the back thereof, ſo that when their enemies thought they had gained their end, as they did conclude by ſuch perſecutions, particularly that *French* maſſacre that the *Proteſtant* intereſt ſhould be quite ruined, they were forced to ſee their labour in vain, and the church more eminently flowriſhing after the ſame.

I ſhall further add, that *antichriſt* hath not only been revealed, and his kingdom come to its height, but it is clear this day that it is on the falling hand, and his ruin is now begun, upon which account we may ſay, yea, have cauſe to ſing that the winter is paſt the fig-tree putteth forth her leaves, that ſheweth the ſummer's approach, yea, the ſinging of birds is heard in our land, let us go forth, and meet him who is now gone out as a mighty man, for the ſalvation of his church, and takes the fields againſt this great adverſary of his truth and people, on whoſe ſide victory doth ſurely wait.

II. WHAT IS YET TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.

HAving touched a little ſome of the moſt concerning prophecies of the ſcripture, both under the *New* and *Old Teſtament*, which are already fulfilled and the truth thereof ſo clearly written forth in the hiſtory of providence, that we may ſay the moſt ordinary obſervers, if they will not ſhut their eyes, cannot want a conviction thereof. I ſhall now in the next place point at that which yet remaineth of the prophetical part of the ſcripture, to be accompliſhed; theſe prophecies which concern the church in theſe laſt times, whereby we may have a ſure demonſtration, how far the night is ſpent, and of the near approach of that bleſſed day of the liberty of the ſons of God, for this doth finiſh the myſtery of God, and fully perfecteth his work, if once that which remaineth of the prophecies of the word were fulfilled.

There are theſe truths the accompliſhment whereof we have a ſure warrant, to expect before the end; 1. *The full ruin and downfal of* Babylon. 2. *The converſion and incalling of the* Jews *to* Jeſus Chriſt. 3. *A ſolemn day of the church's flouriſhing, both* Jews *and* Gentiles, *which ſhall follow the outmaking of the former promiſe.* 4. *The fall and deſtruction of the* Turkiſh Empire, *that cruel party who have been raiſed up, and eſtabliſhed for judgment, with whom the Lord ſhall yet reckon, for all that chriſtian blood by them, ſo unjuſtly ſhed, ſeemeth* clearly held forth, *Rev.* xvi. 12. 5. We are alſo to expect after theſe, that full and laſt ſtroke upon *Gog* and *Magog*, and then the Lord is at hand, and that great myſtery of the prophecies and promiſes of the ſcripture, ſhall then be finiſhed, and at a bleſſed cloſe.

I. We have *the full ruin and deſtruction of antichriſt, and his kingdom* clearly prophecied, and in very expreſs terms promiſed to the church, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 8. *Rev.* xvi. 10, 17. the accompliſhed whereof we do yet according to the ſcripture wait for, that the God of truth who cannot lye or repent, ſhall in due time aſſuredly bring about, and that approacheth when that ſolemn cry ſhall be heard, BABYLON IS FALLEN, anent which we would conſider.

1. That this judgment is already begun and the firſt ſtep thereof viſible is now clear, wherein men may ſee the event moſt exactly anſwer the prophecy, for the Lord hath begun to conſume antichriſt by the breath of his mouth and ſince the firſt breaking up of the light, his kingdom hath been mouldering down before the word, have not nations fallen off at the voice of the preached goſpel? It is true the church wanteth not ſore conflicts,

even under the *vials*, and it is the Lords way to try his people with ſuch various uncertainties, that when things have been moſt promiſing, another providence cometh like a croſs wave, which ſeemeth to drive them as far back as once they ſeemed to be forward, yet it is ſure, and ſhould be beyond debate, that *antichriſt*'s overthrow is upon a preſent advance, and that work of the Lord for his church's deliverance is going forward, for if we believe ſalvation by Chriſt upon the warrant of the word, ſhould we not alſo with much aſſurance believe that *antichriſt*'s wound is deadly, and incurable, which he hath got by the preaching of the goſpel, which all the phyſicians of the earth ſhall never help. 2. This is one of the greateſt and ſignal acts of the judgment of God in his church's enemies, one of the moſt eminent manifeſtations of his glory which he hath reſerved for the laſt times, wherein the appearance of his hand and great power ſhall be very manifeſt, and we are to expect by this remarkable ſtroke that way ſhall be made for that glorious houſe, which Chriſt is to have for himſelf in the latter days, which ſhall be built upon antichriſt's ruins, when that new bride both *Jews* of and *Gentiles*, ſhall be prepared for the marriage ſupper of the *Lamb*. 3. Though we are to expect on clear ground from the word, the Lord's eminent appearing by his immediate hand in this great work which ſhall be ſo convincing in that day, and witneſs an extraordinary providence, that all on-lookers muſt with fear and aſtoniſhment confeſs that this is God's own work, yet, it is alſo clear, that he will therein make uſe of inſtruments fitted, and choſen for that end, who ſhall be raiſed, and acted forth with a more than ordinary ſpirit, to execute the vengeance of the Lord, even the judgment written, amongſt whom the feeble ſhall then be ſtrong, yea, we have ground to expect, that of the Kings of the earth, and the race and ſucceſſors of theſe, who in former times had given their power to the beaſt, ſhall the Lord raiſe up to hate the whore, and make her deſolate; O bleſſed are they who ſhall have a hand in ſo noble a work to ſack, and deſtroy that accurſed city, built up with the blood of the ſaints and martyrs of Jeſus Chriſt. 4. We are not to bound the Lord, as to any particular time for accompliſhing this piece of his word, yet we have clear ground to believe that *Babylon*'s ruin maketh haſt, and the day of the Lord upon her is near, whoſe ſword is bathed in heaven, and that the inſtruments of his vengeance are making ready, one ſtroke upon that party is already paſt, antichriſt hath begun to fall before the word, and muſt fall further until that great ſtroke, which ſhall deſtroy his ſeat, and lay waſt that land, be accompliſhed; ſome promiſing evidences of its near approach I would here point at. 1. The many prayers of the ſaints, which are now before the throne, and cannot want a return, many who wreſtled oft with the Lord on this accompt, though they are away, yet are their prayers to the fore, and waits for this ſolemn manifeſtation of the judgment of God, and the blood of the ſaints doth not ceaſe to cry, yea, hath as loud a cry as ever. 2. It is clear that the *preached goſpel* now ſince the light began to break forth doth ripen, and help to make the harveſt more white than many ages formerly, and truly if we conſider how long the word hath been ſomething a retreat to that party, to come out of *Babylon*, and that for theſe 150 years they have been ſtill acting in oppoſition to ſo clear a light, to ſuch a ſolemn call, ſo many warnings, yea, to ſuch convincing a diſcovery of the Lord's being againſt them in very remarkable providences, doth it not ſhew, at what an height their ſin this day is, and an obſtinate rejecting of cure? 3. We cannot but ſee, how that judgment which ſhould be poured forth on antichriſt under the vials, is in a great meaſure now verified in the event. 4. It is clear, and conſonant to the ſcripture, that the Lord's work is now haſtening in the latter days

days, providence in a ſwift motion and maketh great advance, more quick changes in the caſe of the church both as to ſtorms and calms, and her trials now muſt not be ſo long as in former times, *Rom.* ix. 28. he will cut ſhort his work in righteouſneſs, for a ſhort work will the Lord make in the earth. 5. That antichriſt and his followers, do this day ſeem to be at ſuch an advantage, the Lord's work, as it were at a ſtand, yea, rather going back, this late reviving of *Antichriſtian Prelacy* in *Britain* and *Ireland*, with ſo viſible a growth of *Popery* there, and ſo dark an hour upon the reformed churches abroad, I think on very ſolid grounds is a promiſing evidence of the near approach of a further ſtroke on that party; for it is clear both from the word, and God's ordinary way of procedure how a ſharp ſtorm is uſually previous to ſome remarkable enlargement of the church, a very low ebb, before the turning of the tide, yea, that every ſtep of her advance, whereby ſhe hath gained ground on antichriſt, hath ſtill had ſome conflict and wreſtling going before, and thus the Lord by ſuffering doth ripen his people for ſuch times of mercy; for which time, O let us pray and wait, when the ſmoke of that accurſed city ſhall aſcend up to heaven, and his people be made to triumph in his praiſe, and ſing that ſong, *Halelujah, ſalvation, glory, and honour to the Lord God, who hath judged the great whore, rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy apoſtles and prophets, for God hath avenged you upon her.*

II. We have a clear propheſy anent *the incalling of the Jews*, and their converſion to Chriſt in the latter days, held forth by the prophets, and in the *New Teſtament* very expreſly mentioned, for the fulfilling whereof, the church muſt yet wait, and long after, when God ſhall bring again the captivity of his ancient people, and ſay to that valley of dry bones *live*, anent which we would conſider, *Iſa.* xi. 15. *Rom.* xi. 24. *Rev.* xvi. 12.

1. That this promiſe doth not only concern particular perſons, or a few, but the body and generality of that people, is moſt clear from the ſcripture, if men would compare, *Iſa.* xi. 11. *Zach.* xii. 10. with *Rom.* xi. 25. where it is undeniable that their gathering muſt be as full and remarkable as their ſcattering; and as there is no nation ſo remote whether ſome of them are not at this day, that ſhall not hinder the fulfilling of the promiſe, but as *Eſaiah* ſheweth, the Lord ſhall then aſſemble the diſperſed and outcaſts, and bring them back from the four corners of the earth, and furtheſt places thereof, yea, doth not the apoſtle expreſly ſhew that it is all *Iſrael*, whereat this promiſe pointeth, for though they are enemies concernig the goſpel, yet are they beloved for their father's ſakes, becauſe of the *Covenant* which was made with *Abraham* and his ſeed, and truely we have in this, ground alſo to expect ſomething further than their converſion, that in this day, *the Lord ſhall raiſe the tabernacle of* David *which is fallen, and plant them upon their own land, Amos* xi. 11, 15. not only bring them to a viſible church ſtate, but even therewith ſome temporrl reſtitution, and recollection of them as a nation, yea, may expect a return of the old bleſſing of that lands fruitfulneſs, which I think is clearly held forth in that of *Amos* ix. 14. *that the very hills drop down ſweet wine, and melt as it were in outward bleſſings on them.* 2. That this promiſe hath not yet had an accompliſhment, is alſo clear from the word, for it muſt follow the rejection of that people, and ſhould not take place until the fulneſs of the *Gentiles* be brought in; which harveſt for many ages after was not to be reaped, yea, did not the apoſtle hold this forth as a myſtery, a piece of the ſcripture, which the ancient *jewiſh church* could not well comprehend, when it was pointed at by the prophets, and even at that time was not underſtood, which ſurely could have been no myſtery if their converſion had reached no further than

the

the apoſtles time; and it is known, how ſmall a number ſince of that people hath yet been brought in to Chriſt. 3. We have much ground from the ſcripture, that this day, this great day of *Jezreel* ſhall be a very remarkable and ſolemn time, which will cauſe aſtoniſhment to the nations about, and make a wonderful change on the face of the earth, a time of God's eminent appearance for that people, when his ſingular reſpect ſhall be as manifeſt as formerly his great diſpleaſure and anger was, a time on which many of the choiceſt mercies of the church do certainly wait, the return of many prayers, a large pouring forth of the ſpirit, even on the body of that people and all ranks, not only the families of *David*, *Nathan* and *Levi*, but alſo the families of *Shimei*, with a large outletting of gifts, yea, ſuch a time, wherein the converted of *Iſrael* ſhall then ſee and underſtand, how far the glory of the ſecond temple doth exceed that of the firſt, and be a very conſpicuous part of Chriſt's univerſal kingdom, eminent for the power and purity of the ordinances, to which others ſhall look as a moſt choice and excellent patern of a purely reformed and glorious church. 4. Beſides the promiſe of him who is not like man to lie, or the ſon of man to repent, there wants not ſome very convincing providences to confirm our faith anent this, if we conſider how this people are ſtill kept by themſelves, amidſt all their ſcatterings, not mixt or incorporate with other nations, which is moſt uſual through long converſe, that people of ſeveral parts of the earth will unite and joyn in one, is not their great increaſe alſo remarkable? What great multitudes of them are in the eaſtern parts, yea, through moſt of *Aſia*, *Africa*, and in theſe places of *Europe* where the chriſtian church is, and all this time their land not poſſeſſed but by a rabble of the *Turks*, under whoſe yoke they groan, and though the genealogies of particular families are at this day much toſt, yet there is ſtill ſo much ſure and evident, as to the ſeries and genealogy of the nation that doth difference them from any other people. 5. It is true, the authority of the word ſhould ſilence all our thoughts, how ſo great a thing ſhall be brought about, yet, we may judge, that as a means this ſhall eminently contribute to the ſame, ſuch a convincing ſtroke upon Antichriſt which muſt go before their converſion, wherein ſo manifeſt an appearance of God, and the fulfilling of one of the greateſt promiſes of the *New Teſtament*, cannot but ſtare them in the face, and with this the taking away of that ſtumbling block of idolatry which hath ſo long help'd to harden them againſt the profeſſion of the goſpel. I muſt ſhut up this with a ſad regrate, that whilſt we have ſo clear a promiſe, there is no more tender reſpect, and further eſſay to promote the good of that people, who knoweth what a bleſſing might attend the uſe of ordinary means? ſince this is an unqueſtionable duty, and men know not when they ſow the ſeed, whether this or that ſhall proſper, alaſs, that the uſual deportment of chriſtians with whom they converſe, doth oft further help to highten their prejudice againſt chriſtianity, let us long and pray more for this day, a day which ſhall bring ſo great a bleſſing with it to the *Gentiles*.

III. There are many propheſies both in the *Old* and *New Teſtament* which do clearly point at *a great flouriſhing and proſperity in the days of the goſpel*, which I humbly conceive are not yet fully made out, but ſhall have a more remarkable accompliſhment before the cloſe of time, *Iſa.* lxv. 25. lxvi. 12. *Mich.* iv. 1, 2.

I confeſs the event will be the ſureſt commentary, and until this appears men ſhould be ſober and catuious, that they darken not the counſel of God and his truth, with any wild fancy, and to aim to be wiſe above that which is written, yet, I muſt think that there are great things laid up in theſe promiſes

miſes for the church, that we cannot now well reach, yea, would ſcarce get believed until the appointed time unvail their meaning, I ſhall here but only touch how it may appear theſe promiſes are not yet fully accompliſhed, and what with a ſafe warrant we may expect in their accompliſhment, as to the firſt we would conſider theſe things.

1. That theſe great promiſes which hold forth ſo eminent an enlargement, and flouriſhing of the church, do alſo point at ſome particular limited time, ſome period, and revolution of the church's condition, which is not agreeable and common to other times, until which theſe promiſes do not take place. 2. This promiſed flouriſhing concerneth both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and the word doth clearly point at ſome further increaſe of the *Gentile* church, by the calling of the *Jews*, which muſt have a peculiar reſpect to that ſolemn time of *Iſrael*'s reſtauration, and Antichriſt's ruin, a time on which the return of many prayers, and the fulfilling of ſo many promiſes in the behalf of the church doth ſurely wait; ſo that as *Eſay* and other of the *prophets* do put over this great flouriſhing of the church to the days of the goſpel, the apoſtle *Rom.* xi. doth point at a more preciſe time, wherein this in a larger meaſure ſhall be made out. 3. We cannot find the *chriſtian church* did ever enjoy ſo great an enlargement, and flouriſhing ſtate as theſe promiſes ſeem to import, for perſecution and ſuffering hath moſt been her lot, firſt from the *Jews*, next from her heathen adverſaries, and laſt from Antichriſt, whoſe fall, and ruin we have ground to expect ſhall make room for ſo great an increaſe of the church, for how much power Antichriſt hath, in ſo far is the church kept at under, yea, it is clear how very ſhort all her breathings have been. 4. It would appear ſo ſolemn a time of the church's flouriſhing, whereat the prophets did ſo oft point, as it hath an undoubted reſpect to the days of the goſpel, ſo in its full accompliſhment muſt anſwer to that remarkable day of Satan's binding, and the ſaints reign with Chriſt, when the kingdoms of the earth become the Lord's, which we find doth immediately preceed ſatan's laſt looſing, and his going forth to gather his broken forces, for that great battle which is to be very near the end.

I ſhall but add, we have ground to judge the Lord will uſher in that glorious everlaſting ſtate of the church, even by ſome preparative degrees here, the latter times are therefore to be reckoned the more bleſſed, the more near they approach to the dawning of glory. Now in the ſecond place, I ſhall but point at ſome things which with a ſafe warrant we may underſtand, and look after, in the accompliſhment of theſe promiſes. It is very clear they hold forth a great enlargement to the univerſal church both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, particular churches may be in a ſad withering condition whilſt other parts do flouriſh, but theſe promiſes ſeem to point at a day, which will concern the ſaints in all corners of the earth, who ſhall not want their ſhare with the reſt of that bleſſed time, it may be alſo clear, ſome more bright and hot ſunſhine of the goſpel is held forth, ſome ſuch remarkable ſpring-tide of the ſpirit that ſhall be as diſcernible as the church's low ebb ſometimes was, a day of the great people of God, his preſence very manifeſt among his people, and with the ordinances beyond former times, ſo that *Ezek.* xlviii. 35. the name of that place ſhall be called *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there. *Yea, that in this day Chriſt's viſible kingdom in a ſettled church ſtate ſhall more eminently flouriſh, and the flowing in of people and nations with much fervour, who ſhall joyn themſelves to the Lord, pure ordinances, a more univerſal oneſs amongſt the worſhippers of God, the walk of chriſtians with a diſcernible luſtre of holineſs, made to commend the goſpel, Chriſt's goings full of majeſty, and the ſhout of a king which then ſhall be heard among his*

people, the noise of such sad complaints, and bitter exercises from the spirit of bondage, not so much among the saints as in former times, and though we see no sure ground from the word to expect such a favourable time wherein the church militant shall not have trouble and persecution from the world, yet, there seemeth so much clearly imported in some of these great promises, as point at a great calm, and more favourable gale of outward prosperity, which the church shall then have, yea, this is in some longer continuance than in former ages, a day wherein the haters of the Lord shall even be made to feign subjection, with much of the countenance and concurrence of magistrates, and the civil authority in behalf of the church; yea, a time of much holy fear amongst the people of God, and of much terror and awe upon his enemies, to which the great works of the Lord in that time shall then effectually contribute, and cause them fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days.

(§) IV. There is a special prediction *of* Satan's *binding up and restraint,* and *of some remarkable reign of the church with* Jesus Christ *held forth, Rev.* xx. 2. The full accomplishment of which we on clear ground may judge is not yet come, yet is so far now verified in the event as may clearly witness its meaning, and let us see how at this day it is taking place; I confess this seems one of the most dark and abstruse prophesies we have in the scripture, on which there hath been many strange thoughts and glosses held forth; but to set down these various judgments of men on the truths of God, I humbly think may tend to a further darkning of the same, more than to any solid edification, I shall only offer some things to be considered, which by undeniable consequence from the scripture seem most clear and obvious, and may not only help to the understanding of this prophesy, but that manifest correspondence which is betwixt it and the event at this day.

1. There can be no debate this solemn time of the saints reign with Christ concerns the militant condition of the church, and must be expected here in the earth not in heaven, and therefore we find immediately after, there is a very sore assault of the Devil held forth, who should occasion a new trial to the church, and be for a time let loose to deceive the nations. 2. Since *the scripture is the best interpreter of it self,* we must here understand with comparing one place with another this raising of the saints and martyrs of Jesus Christ to reign with him figuratively, and in such a sense as that in *Rev.* ix. 11. must be understood to wit, a raising of the witnesses in the same spirit and power, and of such a party who should bear the same testimony, to which all that is, *Mal.* iv. 5. and *Mat.* xi. 14. anent *John's* coming in the same spirit of *Elijah,* with which he did appear to the world, gives light, so that we see how consonant and agreeable scripture is with it self. 3. Is not the meaning of the spirit in this prophesy clear, that the greatest enlargement of the church, yea, of the longest duration and continuance that it should have under the *New Testament* unto the second coming of Christ is held forth in the reign of the saints, so that it manifestly points at a more solemn time a more sweet refreshing interval, which shall be remarkable both in measure and duration beyond all she formerly had, and shews that there is no such a happy time else, to go over the churches head till she be triumphant in heaven, therefore it is called κατ' ἐξοχην the church's reign, considered comparatively with any other such change. 4. Is it not very clear that this so remarkable time cannot be judged previous to Antichrist's coming, nor under his advance and growth, since first this points expressly at these who were beheaded for the witness of Christ, and had not worshipped the beast and his image, nor received his mark, who should thus be raised to reign with Christ. 2. We find that it doth very immediately pre-

ceed

ceed that laſt aſſault the church ſhall have upon Satan's looſing to gather the nations to that great battle, and ſo muſt concern theſe laſt times, when the Lord is pouring out his vials upon the throne and kingdom of the beaſt; it is ſtrange when the ſcripture is ſo plain that ſome choice and excellent men writing on this propheſy will have it contemporary with the church's condition before Antichriſt's appearance, for it is ſure if by the beaſt and his image and mark, Antichriſt muſt be underſtood, and if there be but one great aſſault mentioned after this, which the church militant ſhall have before the cloſe of time, this propheſy muſt now be fulfilling, and with no other time before this could quadrate according to the ſcripture. 5. Is it not clear that this great reſtraint of Satan is no ſuch abſolute binding, that will put the church wholly beyond trouble and reach of his aſſaults, no, this belongs to heaven, and is there only to be expected; but the ſcripture very evidently ſhews this ſhall be ſuch a binding up of Satan, that he ſhould not deceive the nations, nor have that wonted power to darken the face of the church by any great or univerſal apoſtacy during this time; and I am ſure it is undeniable, that ſince the church's raiſing from under Antichriſt, Satan hath been thus reſtrained, and by all his violent aſſaults, he hath not reached the full withdrawing of any one nation which was brought under the yoke of the goſpel, whatever may be ſaid of poor *Bohemia* by a violent ſpate of perſecuting ſo born down, that this once famous church is now ſcattered in other places, where there are yet conſiderable numbers, yea, it is not altogether without hope, that the great avenger of blood will yet viſit her captivity again, when it ſeems now furtheſt off and hopeleſs. 6. Muſt we not ſee that this great ſun-ſhine as it takes in Antichriſt's fall, hath a ſpecial reſpect alſo to *Iſrael*'s return and converſion, which according to the ſcripture is one of the moſt ſolemn and flouriſhing times that the chriſtian church ſhall have, and therefore ſhall be to the *Gentiles* as life from the dead, now do but ſeriouſly judge what the church's condition hath been through all the times of the *New Teſtament*, firſt under *Heathens*, and after under the tyranny of *Antichriſt*, and now how far providence does unfold the meaning of this propheſy in the event, ſince the man of ſin began to decline, and I humbly judge, it may be eaſy, to ſee that at this day it is clearly taking place place, though this ſolemn reign be not yet advanced to its greateſt pitch, but will have a more remarkable period ere this propheſy be fully made out. I ſhall but add, this reſurrection mentioned in the propheſy muſt be in a ſpiritual ſenſe underſtood, and can be no bodily raiſing of the ſaints, ſince it is ſo expreſly there called the firſt reſurrection to difference it from the ſecond, and is held forth in an oppoſition to the firſt death. (¶)

VI. We have a propheſy held forth, *Rev.* xvi. 12. which comparing with *Rev.* vi. 13. ſeemeth clearly to point at *the fall and deſtruction of the turkiſh Empire*, who have been theſe many ages ſo great a ſcourge to the chriſtian world, for its manifeſt *that this drying up of the river* Euphrates *muſt relate to that very party which we find in that chap.* ix. raiſed up from about that river, where the *Turk* hath ſo conſiderable a part of his dominions; it is true, the event will more clearly make this known, yet theſe are undeniable.

1. That ſuch a party was foretold by *John* in chap. ix. and a ſolemn warning given to the church of ſo dreadful a ſtorm, the time alſo there pointed forth when Antichriſt ſhould be at a great height, yea, the portraicture of ſuch an adverſary moſt evidently held forth, ſuch as indeed they were found to be, a terrible cruel deſtroying party, and therefore are ſaid to have breaſt-plates of fire, their number alſo there held out to be a very great multitude, which theſe huge armies uſually brought by the *Turk* to the field can witneſs.

2. The

2. The cauſe why the Lord ſhould raiſe up ſo dreadful an enemy, and thus let them looſe, is alſo expreſly declared in chap. ix. 20. that it was in judgment, and for a plague on men for Antichriſtian idolatry, which then had ſo much overſpread the earth, and it was no wonder, that when ſo much of the viſible church was turned almoſt brutiſh in their religion, and from the pure worſhip of God, was carried after idols of gold and ſilver, the work of mens hands, that ſo brutiſh and barbarous an adverſary ſhould be let out for a ſcourge; I truly think that as *Antichriſt*, and the abominations of that party have been hitherto the let of ſucceſs againſt the *Turk*; ſo we are not to expect the proſpering of any ſuch deſign, and his fall and ruin, until the cauſe be removed; for which the Lord did make uſe of this dreadful rod. 3. That ſuch a party was raiſed up according to the propheſy, yea, at the appointed time thereof, is very clear, who like a mighty deluge did overflow a great piece of the earth, and with ſtrange prodigious ſucceſs, did over-turn much of *Aſia*, ſome parts of *Africk*, and break in on *Europe* to give work to theſe kings and great men, *and be a ſcourge to them who had given their power to uphold the throne of the beaſt.* 4. There is alſo clear ground from the ſcripture that the Lord ſhall as eminently appear in the fall, and deſtruction of this adverſary as in the raiſing of them up, and that by their fall, he is to make way for the accompliſhing of his promiſe, anent the church's further encreaſe, his ancient people, whereto this propheſy ſeems to have a particular reſpect: this we are to look after as one of the great works of the Lord's that is reſerved for the latter days which ſhall no leſs ſhew forth his power and glory, *even the drying up of that great Euphrates*, than in the day that he divided the *ſea*, and made *Jordan* a dry channel for his people to go through; we are not to be further poſitive anent means and inſtruments, how ſuch a thing ſhall be brought about, it is enough what the Lord hath ſpoken, and the word that is gone out of his mouth ſhall not return in vain.

VII. Now to cloſe this, there is yet one great aſſault which we find the church ſhall have before the end, and then her warfare will be near finiſhed, anent which the ſcripture is clear, that Satan for a little muſt be let looſe, and that ſolemn and perfect victory, which the church in the cloſe of time will get over all adverſaries, ſhall be uſhered in with a very ſharp trial, and once again this ungodly world will ſhew its rage, ralley its broken ſcatrered forces, in a general muſter, *Rev.* xx. 8. with as much fury as ever, and there ſhall the Lord eminently appear, that by one full ſtroke he may for ever decide that long continued war and feud betwixt the church and her enemies, a deliverance which as it will be the laſt, ſo one of the greateſt, that ever the church had, the Lord thus finiſhing his work of providence by ſo ſtately and magnificent a cloſe; and truely after this we know no more of canonick ſcripture to be fulfilled but the coming of the Lord, when the poor, toſt afflicted church, ſhall enter unto a triumphant eſtate above all the violence and oppreſſion of men. O bleſſed and long looked for day of Chriſt's return to judgment, when the duſt of the ſaints, that for ſome thouſand years paſt, hath been reſting in hope, ſhall awake, and this earth and all the glory thereof like a poor vain ſhew diſappear? O bleſſed, and comfortable time in which the ſaints ſhall then fully know what heaven is, which they have ſo oft admired at a diſtance, to behold his face in whoſe preſence is fulneſs of joy, and ſhall need no further confirmations of the the truth of the word, when once this great promiſe of the Lord's return is verifyed, a promiſe wherein all theſe precious truths which concerned the church in her journey, as ſo many ſtreams ſhall empty themſelves in this great deep, then there is no more to do: *The work of the goſpel is finiſhed, the redeemed all brought in, and the bride made ready to go*

go forth and meet him, who shall fully satisfy, and comfort his people, according to the days of their former affliction, and be for ever their exceeding great reward.

THE FIRST ARGUMENT.

THAT which not only is for the most part already accomplished, but is a thing whereof we have so sure confirmations, yea, so great a pledge in our hand from the Lord, that what yet remaineth shall be certainly fulfilled, must it not be an undoubted truth? But the scripture as to the special predictions, that are not yet made out, is such, anent which the Lord hath given his people a very large pledge, and strong confirmations now in these latter times, to believe their certain accomplishment. Therefore, *&c.*

It is sure that a part of the scripture, some special prophecies, which do concern the state of the church in these last times, hath not yet had an accomplishment, which are already touched in the former argument, and are indeed so great concerning truths that may cause us sit down, and wonder, when we think these shall shortly come to pass; yet such, whereof we may be fully perswaded, if we consider that they are held forth, and promised by him who is the God of truth, and the begun performance hereof, now so manifest, yea what hath been the Lord's way, and the eminent providences of last times which may fully satisfy our spirits, that God's work is near to a close, and the accomplishing of the whole scripture now at hand. I shall here point at some special grounds whence the godly in these times may be throughly confirmed anent the truth, and certain outmaking of the scripture, and these prophecies thereof, that yet are not fulfilled, which we should look on, as a very convincing pledge in our hand of the same.

First is not *the being of the world, yea the heavens and the earth which we see, and the continued course of nature given from the Lord, and held forth to his people, as a witness to his truth, and a sure pledge to confirm their faith anent its accomplishment?* That when we look upon the heavens or the earth we may there read a visible seal of the certain performance of the whole scripture of God, which for that very end are set before our eyes; we have this clear, *Jer.* xxxiii. 20. that the covenant with the day and the night is there given to the church to confirm that covenant betwixt the Lord and his people, this also is held forth, *Jer.* xxxi. 35. *Thus saith the Lord, who gives the sun a light by day, and the moon and stars by night, if these ordinances shall depart, then may the seed of Israel cease and fail from being a nation,* It is also clear, *Psal.* lxxxix. 2. *That the faithfulness of God is established in the very heavens*, and these given as a special convincing pledge to confirm the faith of his people in the matter of his truth, and of the performance of his word, for which we will find in the 37 verse of that Psalm, *the sun and the moon given to the church as a witness:* is not the *rainbow* also, *Gen.* ix. (though not natural, but an instituted sign, because there is no correspondence betwixt the sign and the thing signified) given as a visible sign of the covenant of God to seal unto men the assurance of his word and promise? I must think it strange that we do not consider this world and look on the frame thereof with more astonishment, yea, that it is not a greater and more marvelous thing in our eyes if we would but think seriously, whence it is and it came to have a Being; let us suppose one were brought forth into the light, from a dark place where he had never seen it before, and there let his eyes wander a little upon the heavens and the earth, O what a dazling and amazing sight would that be! But it must be said we look on these every day,

yet know not how to read or understand, what is written thereon; oh this great universe is for the most part as a sealed book.

But for clearing of this truth there are two things we would gravely consider. 1. Something which must be previously known, and believed, that those visible heavens and earth are the very work and product of this God, whose word and promise we have in the scripture, and have their being and original from him; for otherwise there could be no reasoning from these anent the truth of his word. 2. We would also consider, what a convincing pledge is here, for confirming our faith of the scripture, and of the sure performance of all that is yet remaining thereof to be accomplished.

As to the first, it might seem unnecessary so much as once to mention it, since it is so little questioned, or under debate; but oh it is too clear, that many truths are easily admitted, which are not really believed: I know the world would find it hard to shift so manifest a demonstration, that this universe is the work and product of the great God, when there is in it so bright a discovery of infinite power and wisdom, truly it is strange how men could admit its being who have denyed its beginning, which not only by faith we understand, but it is most evident from solid grounds of reason, and though men are undone with implicite faith and a common assent to the greatest fundamental truths without any solid perswasion thereof, yet the greatest atheists cannot keep off the discovery of this, but by keeping at a distance from it; which truly *Aristole* and others of these ancients, did not so much deny the same, but not knowing the scripture they could not know how it should be: thence *Epicurus* and others of his followers finding that they could not salve the *Phænomena* of nature and shun unanswerable absurdities if they admitted an eternity of the world, did fall on such an irrational fancy, to avoid this, *of the fortuitous concourse of atoms*, yea some held an eternal præexistence of the first matter, which pitiful notions may shew what sad case men are in, who groap after the truth by the twilight of nature, and are strangers to the scripture: but I leave this, and shall only touch a little some clear and satisfying evidences of this truth, that the beginning and original of the world is not more clear from the scripture, than it is also demonstrable from solid convincing grounds of reason; and truly a clear discovery of this hath a further reach than may be apprehended, to give the atheism of men a dead stroke, and shake all its grounds: now let these few things be seriously considered. 1. If you confess there is a *deity, that* God *blessed for ever is*, must you not necessarily admit a creation and beginning, since eternity is a thing that is only communicable to the first cause, and yet cannot conceive that the earth could produce it self, for to exist and not to exist at the same time is a contradiction; and I am sure they must shut their eyes who do not every where discern some witness of the glorious being of God. 2. You cannot deny that there is such a thing as time, since there is no judging of days, years and ages to be infinite, or how one thing in a continued order should go before another without coming to some first and beginning. 3. Do's not this gradual advance of human knowledge in the earth, and that further discovery which arts and sciences have made by a continued improvement of the same, witness very clearly a beginning and original of the world, for ye could not conceive a perpetual succession of mankind with a constant essay after further knowledge, with such a continued progress in experience, as an eternity supposed before this would produce, and yet the most concerning arts and sciences, yea, the choicest experiments and inventions we have in the world to be of so late a rise and date, such as the use of printing, and of the mariners compass by the load stone, the use of guns, the improvement

of

of minerals in medicine; yea the very motion and convoy of the blood in man's body which are but of late diſcovery. 4. May not ſo ſhort a hiſtory which to this day we have of the world, witneſs its late original, and that it is of no eternal duration, ſince the ancienteſt records of time, or of things paſt do not exceed ſome thouſands of years; and could this be poſſibly conceived, that infinite ages preceeding, if ſuch had been, ſhould give no account nor leave a remembrance to poſterity, when the late ages hold ſo much forth; yea, how could it be that it is but of late one part of the world is known and diſcovered to another part thereof? 5. It is very manifeſt from the known records we have of by-paſt times, what hath been the riſe and encreaſe of nations, yea, how a great part of men have from a rude and ſavage eſtate been brought into ſociety, and under laws and government, which ſhews this world muſt be of a ſhort duration, which none could conceive by admitting ſuch a ſuppoſal of its eternal being. 6. It is ſure man is born and dies, and in that ordinary way of generation mankind is ſtill propagate; and is not here the world's beginning very obvious? for you cannot judge that men ſhould beget other eternally without going back at laſt to ſome firſt man, who could not beget himſelf. 7. If eternity be preferable to time, can you judge the excellenteſt things of the earth, ſuch as man, and next unto him the beaſts, are periſhing, and only theſe things which are inanimate and the maſs of the earth whereon they tread is of a perpetual duration. 8. It is manifeſt what an increaſe a few men (not to ſpeak of other living creatures) may in an ordinary way have, to people a vaſt country even in ſome ages, now is it not thus clear the world can be of no eternal duration, for if you ſhould this way, turn back on an infinite number of ages, and ſuppoſe that every age ſhould but add and multiply to the race of man two or three, it would come at laſt to this, the earth could not bear them; ſince we muſt thus oppoſe ſome infinite encreaſe from an infinite continuance of the world, which no wars or conſuming ſtrokes could in ſuch a meaſure diminiſh. 9. Can you conceive that ſhould be eternal which is wholly made up of corruptible and periſhing things; ſince the things of the world have all their ſet times and ſeaſons wherein they appear, and are quickly gone: in a word muſt not theſe deny a diſſolution of this world or an after judgment and life to come, yea the whole truth of religion, if this great truth be not received and believed.

But having premitted ſome few evidences that may witneſs the original of the world, yea that this marvelous frame with the whole continued courſe of nature is the product of a divine power and wiſdom, I ſhall here in the ſecond place point at ſome few things, which may ſhew how great a pledge this is, and what a quieting ground it ſhould be to the faith of the godly, that the ſcripture is certainly true, and muſt have an accompliſhment, ſince from the very being and beginning of the world, we may clearly reaſon to theſe which by undeniable conſequence follows.

1. *That the world now is,* is a ſure and confirming witneſs to its laſt cloſe, and of the accompliſhment of that promiſe, *of its diſſolution in the end of time,* we know it is not long ſince there was no *earth,* no *ſun, moon* or *ſtars,* now upon no leſs ſecurity than that word, by which it was formed we muſt believe it ſhall e'er long ceaſe to be, what now it is, and thus when we look upon the world, and ſee ſuch a thing before us, ought we not to read that promiſe of its after diſſolution clearly written thereon before our eyes? 2. It is a very clear conſequence, that this God can bring his word unto performance, and his power therein cannot fail or fall ſhort, yea that his counſel and purpoſe have no dependence on means or inſtruments who did once bring this

this world out of nothing, and ſaid let there be heaven and an earth when there was none: O when we open the Bible and read the great promiſes thereof, ſhould we not have that impreſſion on our ſouls, theſe are the true and faithful ſayings of God, and his word with whom the doing thereof is as eaſy as to ſay it; who without the concurrence of inſtruments, or any co-workers could bring this great creation forth; we truly ſo far miſtake the meaning of the heavens, and theſe great celeſtial bodies, with the marvelous order that is there, when we cannot read the truth and faithfulneſs of God in all his promiſes write thereupon, for they are held forth to men as a confirming pledge of the ſame, and this were indeed an excellent ſtudy and improvement of Aſtrology. 3. Since it is ſure and undeniable that this earth doth hang in the empty place, though men ſee not whereon it leans and reſts: O what a ſtrange thing is it! Could the air bear up ſo vaſt and ponderous a body, but herein is a marvelous divine power convincingly witneſſed, which hath ſo eſtabliſhed it that it cannot be moved; now is not this very word that bears up ſuch a weight, and thence with as clear ground we may reaſon, for adventuring of the church with its weight, and every chriſtian's burden, whatever it may be, on the promiſe of this God, on whoſe word the great bulk of the earth doth this day lean: I muſt ſay no mathematical demonſtration do's follow, by a clearer evidence, than this conſequence from ſuch premiſes is undeniable. 4. We ſee the Lord keeps covenant with the day and the night, yea that ſummer and winter do not fail before him according to his promiſe, and are not theſe a viſible witneſs for God that his truth and covenant with his church ſhall not fail, for it is ſure the continued courſe of nature hath ſuch an audible voice if we could but liſten thereto. 5. Do's not the Lord clearly witneſs by ſuch a ſtrange contrariety that is amongſt the elements, and theſe different qualities whereof he ſerves himſelf in this great frame, and compoſure of the world, that this promiſe ſhall not fail, but it is eaſy for him to verify the ſame, in making all things work together, were they never ſo croſs and diſagreeing among themſelves, for an accompliſhment of his deſign. 6. When we ſee the rage and violence of the great *ocean* bounded by a *bank* of *ſand*, for which there could be no true reaſon given, how ſuch an impetuous and furious motion could be reſtrain'd, and the ſand be a bridle to the ſea, if it were not to make out the faithfulneſs of God, who by a perpetual decree hath thus bounded it; O is there not thence a viſible confirmation of his truth! that he can alſo reſtrain the rage of men, and turn it unto his praiſe, and for attaining this end ſerve himſelf of moſt improbable midſes; it was a notable ſaying of a grave miniſter of Chriſt, when he was upon the ſea in a ſtorm. *O ſhall I fear*, ſays he, *the face of a tyrant, that ſerve him who can reſtrain and tame the rage of this ſwelling Sea.* 7. If we conſider the earth and its original, and look aright on that ſo oft repeated diſcovery we have of the ſeed time and harveſt, and of the earth bringing forth ſuch innumerable kinds of vegetables in the ſpring after a dead winter, as out of their graves, may we not thence have a very clear confirming ſeal of that great truth of the reſurrection, and of the raiſing of the duſt of mens bodies that are buried under the earth; I ſhall but ſay, do's not God thus give a continued wonder, and ſet the ſame before our eyes in the continued courſe of nature, to aſſure us of his truth and promiſe, that it ſhall not fail though there were no appearance how in an ordinary way it could be accompliſhed.

II. Ground whence we may be thus confirmed in our faith is this; *That not only the moſt part of the ſcripture is already proved and verified in the event*, but alſo, *Theſe truths of the whole ſcripture are moſt ſtrange, and marvelous, yea, ſhould have much ſtaggered our faith, if they were yet ſtill*

in

in a promiſe are this day certainly accompliſhed, I ſhall but only inſtance *The coming of the Meſſias*, which the prophets of old foretold, that God ſhould be manifeſt in the fleſh, *and* a virgin *bring forth a* ſon, whoſe name ſhould be *Emmanuel*, that was to die, and be cut off out of the land of the living, not for himſelf, but for the tranſgreſſion of his people, is not this now ſurely accompliſhed? which we may ſay is the greateſt wonder, the moſt aſtoniſhing thing that ever was, or ſhall be, and ſhould fully ſilence our thoughts anent any other ſcripture truth, that is yet to be made out, for we know that the great buſineſs of redemption is put to a cloſe, the ranſom and price thereof fully told down, now is the doctrine of the goſpel ſealed, and atteſted by blood, even the blood of the *Teſtator*, it is now ſure the promiſed *Meſſias* hath come, and this is he, who in the days of *Pilate* ſuffered at *Jeruſalem*, in whom all things which were written by the prophets, were truly accompliſhed. And is not this a great pledge, to aſſure us of the real outmaking of every other promiſe? It is ſure he did die, his bleſſed ſide was pierced with a ſpear, and upon the croſs he cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghoſt. O here lieth the greateſt cauſe of wonder, not what doth yet remain of the ſcripture, but that which is already fulfilled, not that Chriſt ſhould come again to judge the world, but that once he did come to the world, and become man; for God to be found in the form of a ſervant and die, that is beyond expreſſion wonderful, for the other muſt neceſſarily as a conſequent follow, that he who hath redeemed the church, and did pay her ranſom ſhould ſee the travel of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied, that having made ſuch a purchaſe he ſhould alſo have poſſeſſion and finiſh the building, the foundation whereof was his own blood. I confeſs what we do yet expect according to the promiſe, are great and aſtoniſhing truths, the full overthrow of Antichriſt and his kingdom, that the dead bones of the *jewiſh church* ſhould again live, but ſpecially Chriſt's return to judgment, who ſhall be revealed from heaven with flaming fire, the ſound of the trumpet and voice of the archangel, yet, how great ſoever they are and may ſeem hard for us to believe, O how ſmall comparatively are they, with that which is already done and accompliſhed, the incarnation of the Son of God, a myſtery hid from ages, wherein the angels with wonder do look, which we may ſay, is unſpeakably more great, than to create this world, and turn it again to nothing; it may be truly ſtrange, whilſt we read theſe prophecies anent Chriſt, and his kingdom in ſo plain an hiſtory, and profeſs that we believe he did die, and riſe again, we ſhould have ſuch heſitation, anent the performance of any other ſcripture promiſe; is it not this day much more eaſy to believe the ſcripture and fulfilling thereof, than it was of old for the *jewiſh church* before Chriſt's coming? And now may we not with as much aſſurance wait for the ſecond coming of the Lord, and a full perfecting of his word even from that which is already verified thereof, as we are ſure of the return of the ſun after it is gone down, and of the breaking of the day when once the night is paſt.

III. Ground whence the godly in theſe times ſhould be confirmed anent the full performance of that which is yet remaining of the ſcripture, that *it is ſure, yea, now near at hand*, is this, that *Jeſus Chriſt is come to action againſt the enemies of his church, and hath taken the fields, that ſurely he is now gone forth in the greatneſs of his ſtrength conquering, and to conquer.* This is a grave truth which might give us very ſweet refreſhing thoughts in ſo ſhaking a time, that whilſt we have ſeen the Lord's appearing by a great, and outſtretched hand for his people, theſe terrible ſtirs, and concuſſions of the nations, have ſeen him ſtrike through kings in the day of wrath, and fill the places with the dead bodies of his adverſaries, we may alſo on clear

ſcripture grounds conclude, that the Lord is now awaked as a mighty man, and upon the fields, yea, that the war is ſurely begun againſt antichriſt, and all the adverſaries of his church, which ſhall not ceaſe until the full victory be obtained; for indeed theſe providences which in theſe laſt times ſhould be very affrightning and terrible, when we go in to the word, we ſhall find they have a comfortable aſpect on the church, and do preſage her greater enlargement, which as the tender buds, and leaves of the fig-tree, are put forth to ſhew the ſummer's approach, *Luk.* xxi. 28. It is true, the church is now low, and the work of God meets with very ſad interruptions which are needful both for trial and rebuke, but this alſo is ſure which none can deny, that the Lord hath eminently appeared, and done great things for his church, yea, we muſt ſay, he hath, by a confluence of very remarkable providences thus condeſcended to ſtrengthen his people's hands, to confirm ſuch who are ready to ſtagger, even as it were by crutches, anent the greatneſs of theſe things which are yet promiſed. Now to clear this truth a little, we ſhall conſider, Firſt; How it is very conſonant to the ſcripture, and expreſly held forth in the ſame, that in the laſt times, and turn of the church's caſe from antichriſt, the Lord will thus appear in his great ſtrength, and ſet up his ſtandard againſt his adverſaries, yea, will then in a ſpecial way call forth his people, to glorify him by an active teſtimony. 2. That Lord hath thus begun to appear according to his word is a truth that is alſo undeniable, and ſhould much help to confirm our faith, anent the performance of that which further remains of the ſcripture. 1. That this is manifeſt from the word may be thus clear. Firſt, Though the church militant muſt not want an adverſary, and ſome perſecution from the world, even in her beſt eſtate, yet, we have a ſafe warrant to expect that the Lord will glorify himſelf in a peculiar way, in his people now in theſe latter days, by doing and acting for the truth, as in former ages his glory did moſt appear, during Antichriſt's reign, in his churches ſuffering; for then the faith and patience of his ſaints was to be witneſſed in its ſeaſon, *Rev.* xiii. 10. and thus he would ſerve himſelf of his people, and bring forth his glory, until that time of retribution, when theſe who had killed with the ſword, ſhould be killed by the ſword, and theſe who led unto captivity be ſo dealt with, which doth alſo clearly promiſe ſome ſpecial outletting of the ſpirit for acting with theſe gifts of courage and reſolution ſuitable to the ſervice of the church in theſe latter days; and truly I think it is great want we ſtudy not more the accompliſhing of the promiſes, and how to improve the ſame for gifts, as well as grace, in order to the ſeveral times and neceſſities of the church. 2. It is very clear from the ſcripture that in theſe laſt days, when Chriſt is to raiſe his church from under the power and tyranny of *Antichriſt* he ſhall then appear in a warlike poſture, which *John* had ſhewed to him, *Rev.* xix. 13, 14. as one upon the head of his forces, with his veſture dipped in blood, to ſhew that when once the war is begun againſt his adverſary, and this lion of the tribe of *Juda* begins to rouze himſelf up, what a terrible appearance he will have in that undertaking; and it is clear, that the Lord hath declared in this his counſel and will, that his ſon Chriſt ſhould in the latter times, take unto himſelf his great power and reign, *Rev.* xi. 17. *yea, cauſe the world know him to be head of principalities and powers, as well as of the church,* for his glory in this truth as a king, which former ages ſeemed in ſo great a meaſure to darken, muſt then clearly ſhine forth. I truly think mens appearing with ſuch violence, and rage againſt ſo concerning a truth, now in theſe days doth promiſe ſome eminent appearance of the Lord therein, and that he ſhall yet more ſolemnly aſſert the ſame before the world. 3. Doth not the ſcripture point at the laſt times, *as*

that

that ſpecial time of recompence for the controverſy of Sion *to which the Lord hath reſerved a ſolemn triumph of his juſtice, over all his church's enemies, when he ſhall enquire for the blood of his ſaints, ſhed upon the earth ſince the days of* Abel, *at* Babylon's *hand, Rev.* xviii. 24. that great adverſary, who ſtands in law guilty, and hath ſerved her ſelf heir to all the violence and cruelty done in former ages, for in her hand muſt that cup be found full, which the enimies of the church from the beginning have been filling up, and as ſo many rivers, and fountains hath run unto this great ſea. 4. It is alſo clear, that in the laſt times, when the Lord ſhall bind up the breach of his people, and heal the ſtroke of their wound, who for ſo long a time, had been trampled under by *Antichriſt*, he ſhall by ſome ſignal providences roll away this reproach, and ſcandal of means, contempt and perſecution, ſhall put ſome glory on his church proportionable to its former abaſement, yea, thus comfort her, and cauſe his peoples upriſing, in meaſure, and kind to anſwer their low and ſuffering ſtate from *Antichriſt*, even in the laſt times, *when the Lord ſhall make them appear with the face of a* Lion, *when the feeble ſhall be as* David, *and as the angel of the Lord, Zach,* xii. 8. which promiſe doth clearly point at the church's raiſing and delivery from Antichriſt; upon the back whereof we find the prophet doth foretel the laſt converſion and incoming of *Iſrael*. 5. I ſhall only add what the ſcripture doth moſt expreſly ſhew, that the Lord ſhall ſo glorioufly appear in bringing his church out of *Babylon*, and executing his judgment on that adverſary, as in the day when he brought his people out of *Egypt*, and therefore ſhall they ſing the ſong of *Moſes*, and the lamb, *Rev.* xvi. 3. his great power and outſtretched hand, being no leſs diſcernible therein, than if they had been ſtanding with *Iſrael* at the *Red-ſea*, when they ſaw their enemies lying dead upon the ſhore; yea, have we not ground to believe, that the Lord ſhall make himſelf very evidently known in raiſing inſtruments, and acting them forth, which hath been already ſeen, and I am ſure the world muſt confeſs what great things have been done by theſe of whom little was expected. 6. That the Lord hath thus begun to appear, and make himſelf known to the world in theſe laſt ages according to his word, is a thing very eaſy to demonſtrate, for 7. Is it not clear how in theſe laſt times, he hath met his enemies upon their high places, and in their greateſt ſtrength, that by a ſtrong hand he did make room for his truth, when both law, and force did withſtand the ſame, and put the marks of his wrath on ſuch who would oppoſe the ſpreading of his kingdom, that they have been as viſible, as ſometimes their rage, and violence againſt the church was; yea, ſince the Lord begun to lift up a ſtandard for the truth, and call forth his people to act, hath it not been ſeen they have loſed their ground more by under-hand treaties, and turning aſide to carnal politick ſhifts than by open force and violence, which the *French* maſſacre, with other ſad inſtances can witneſs; for indeed the church hath ſtill loſt leaſt, by greateſt oppoſition. Have we not ſeen by what dreadful ſhakings and alterations of the earth, this late glorious reformation of the church from Antichriſtianiſm hath been uſhered in, which hath been more ſtrange and frequent, than in many ages before; *hath not the Lord cauſed the nations ſhake, and the earth to reel like a drunken man*, to ſhew men that though he ſuffered long in former times of the world's ignorance, he will not ſo now bear with oppoſing his truth. Have we not alſo ſeen the Lord's raiſing up men fit for action, in theſe laſt times, men of a great heroick ſpirit, with ſome more than ordinary elevation of the ſame, to appear for his intereſt, ſuch we may ſay, that many former ages could not inſtance, in which the Lord's helping his people to

do

to do great things, his ſuiting them with endowments for the ſervice, and work of the time, hath been moſt diſcernible? Was not that excellent man the *Admiral of France*, with many others in that place, eminently raiſed up, for the neceſſity of that time, and do we not find theſe *Princes of Orange*, *William* and *Maurice*, and *Mauritius* of *Saxony*, whom the Lord raiſed againſt *Charles* V. and cauſed him to flee over the *Alps*, yea, what marvelous reſolution and courage did attend the actings of the confederates of the *Low Countries*, and in latter times do we not find *Guſtavus* King of *Sweeden*, *Bernard* Duke of *Weymer*, *Landſgrave* of *Heſſe*, with many others eminenrly raiſed to avenge the Lord's quarrel againſt that bloody houſe of *Auſtria*; have we not alſo ſeen very great inſtruments raiſed up in *Britain* and *Ireland*, (who were followed with wonderful ſucceſs) to act for the truth againſt *Antichriſtian Prelacy*; and truly we muſt ſay the withdrawing in ſuch a meaſure of that ſpirit of courage and reſolution, which once was ſo viſibly let forth in the firſt dawning of the *Reformation*, may ſadly point at a great decay of zeal, ſelf-confidence, unfaithfulneſs as to the improving of opportunites; for the Lord was with his people whilſt they were with him, and did ſingly follow him in his way, but alaſs, with their departing, it may be ſaid their ſtrength hath departed from them, however, the quarrel is clear for an oppreſſed peoples acting, upon ſo juſt, ſo neceſſary an account as the intereſt of religion againſt the cruelty and violent encroachments of Antichriſt, wherein as the Lord hath eminently owned his people, ſo, I dare not queſtion he will yet appear, and ſilence the adverſaries of this truth, by ſuch an argument, againſt which they ſhall not debate. 8. That univerſal deluge of blood which for theſe 100 years paſt hath overflowed much of *Europe* can be a witneſs to this, that the Lord hath taken peace from men who would not embrace the peace of the goſpel offered in theſe laſt times, and given his enemies who had ſhed the blood of the ſaints, blood to drink in great meaſure. I am ſure poor *Germany* can prove this, which for twenty years together was a field of dead men, and *France* from the days of *Hen.* II. to the eſtabliſhment of *Hen.* IV. how long were the *Low Countries* made a *ſtage* of *war*, where many a cruel *Spaniard* did fall under the ſword of an avenging God, beſides the late bloody wars in *Britain* and *Ireland*, and what doth this declare, *but that* Jeſus Chriſt *hath taken the fields, and it will not be now with the Kings of the earth, to oppreſs his church, and withſtand the truth as in former times.*

I ſhall but add, how wonderfully hath the Lord appeared in delivering his church at the greateſt extremity, hath turned his enemies counſels and deſigns upon themſelves, brought about the great works of the laſt times by means ſo unexpected and improbable, that we may ſay, as to what of his judgment is already executed againſt Antichriſt, hath been no leſs marvelous than that *Jericho*'s walls ſhould fall at the ſound of a trumpet of rams-horn; or a cake of barley bread tumbling into the hoſt of *Midian* ſhould ſmite and overthrow the ſame; ſurely when we conſider, what the Lord hath done, and how exactly that doth anſwer the ſcripture, we may have much to confirm us, anent the further acompliſhment of his word, and be aſſured that the term of his long ſuffering towards *Babylon* is at an end, war is denounced, and the execution already begun, which muſt not have a cloſe until judgdment be accompliſhed into victory.

IV. Ground which may confirm the faith of the ſaints, and be as a pledge in their hand of the full accompliſhing of the ſcripture, yea, that this is near, is this, that *the day is now turned, and that propheſied victory which the church ſhould have over Antichriſt before the end, is not only begun, but in a great meaſure advanced.* This

This is indeed a great confirmation when we ſee ſo marvelous a criſis in the church's caſe, her recovery from ſo deſperate and hopeleſs a diſeaſe already begun, that it ſhall be further perfected; we are made to wonder at the greatneſs of theſe things yet promiſed, but why ſhould we not alſo wonder at that which God hath already done for his church, in our days; the ſcripture doth ſhew that Antichriſt's ruin muſt begin by the word, that this ſtroke ſhall be gradual, and however that great work of God meet with much oppoſition, yet, it ſhall no more go back in the whole, and muſt we not ſay in all this the word is fulfilled, it hath not hitherto failed the church, but the event in every circumſtance made to anſwer to the ſame. Now to clear this we would conſider theſe two. Firſt, that the *church's* victory over *Antichriſt* is this day ſo far advanced. 2. How the Lord's very immediate hand hath been moſt diſcernible therein.

1. The firſt I need but name whilſt it is ſo manifeſt, what the Lord hath wrought for his church, for we have ſeen *kingdoms* and *nations*, ſubject themſelves to the truth, the kingdom of *Antichriſt* grow dark, with the breaking up of the light, and many of his followers made to gnaſh their teeth, being ſcorched with the heat and power of the goſpel; in how great a meaſure is that intereſt now ſhaken, if we conſider what the Lord hath wrought, what a great reformation hath been in *Britan* and *Ireland*, through much of *France*, *Germany*, *Sweden*, the *Low Countries*, *Poleland*, *Denmark*, yea, even in *Hungary* and *Tranſilvania*, ſure this was a great work, which ſhould be marvelous in our eyes, how that *Antichriſtian Empire* contrived with ſuch wiſdom, underpropt with ſo great ſtrength, whoſe commands not long ſince were received as oracles, with an awe and reſpect only due to God, hath in ſuch a meaſure begun to fall before the power of the word. O the righteous judgment of the Lord, which he hath ſhewed forth upon that adverſary, and ſhould be a pledge to us of the furrher manifeſtation thereof, an adverſary we may ſay the greateſt that ever the church had, whoſe little finger hath been ſorer than the loins of all who went before, if we conſider his cruelty over mens bodies, tyranny over their conſcience, with ſo long a continuance of that trial; in reſpect of whom it may be ſaid *Pharaoh* was an eaſy taskmaſter, *Antiochus* and the *Roman Emperors* mild, who for near 1200 years did carry on a deſperate and bloody war againſt the church.

II. The ſecond which I would at ſome more length follow is this, *how the Lord's hand and ſomething of an extraordinary providence hath been no leſs diſcernible in this late raiſing of the church, and her begun victory over Antichriſt than in the firſt planting of chriſtianity by the apoſtles*, this is a truth which to many may ſeem ſtrange, but when ſeriouſly conſidered, if prejudice do not darken mens judgment, will appear from ſure and ſolid grounds; now to demonſtrate this I would here offer ſome very convincing witneſſes, which may help to ſtrengthen the faith of the godly, and give atheiſm ſome daſh.

First, Witneſs to this truth is, *that wonderful ſucceſs which the goſpel in theſe laſt times hath had*, wherein men muſt ſee the great power of God, and efficacy of the ſpirit in ſome meaſure as manifeſt, as in the firſt riſe of the chriſtian church, if we conſider.

1. From what a ſmall ſpark ſo great a fire did break up which in a ſhort time put *Europe* in a flame, and made ſo great a change therein, even *Luther*'s appearing againſt *Texelius*, upon the account of his *indulgencies*, O but God's time of working may be oft contrary to our time of expecting. 2. What a ſwift progreſs did the goſpel have? may we not ſay with wonder, can a nation be born at once, yet, this we have ſeen how many nations and cities in one

and the ſame age, yea, in leſs than forty years, was brought in ſubjection to the truth, and theſe inſtruments whom ſcarce any durſt own at firſt, made to ſee great princes with armies on the fields for the intereſts of Chriſt. 3. Have we not ſeen religion propagated by martyrdom, no leſs than in the primitive times, and mens eſſays to ruin the church helped it further to grow. O what but a divine power could thus bring gold out of iron and clay, bring a flouriſhing church out of their aſhes, and turn her poiſon to a preſervative, but alaſs, it is ſad, that whilſt men were burned for the truth, and reading the ſcripture, their affection did alſo burn in reading the ſame, but now with our liberty there is ſo great a decay. 4. Muſt not the wiſe and politicians of the world confeſs this late encreaſe of the church, is a thing above their reach, moſt croſs to all their rules, which they cannot ſee how in an ordinary way it could be brought about. 5. Were not inſtruments moſt unlikely for ſo great a work if we would judge as men, that ſuch a poor handful as *Luther*, *Zuinglius*, *Melanchton*, *Bucere*, &c. ſhould go forth to confront that power which then made the earth to tremble, might it not ſeem as improbable as the ſending forth of ſome fiſher men to ſubdue the nations? 6. It is known they were none of the *Rabbies* of the time, whoſe repute and fame might have purchaſed eaſy acceſs to their meſſage, nay, *they were loaded with all the reproach which their adverſaries could deviſe, with novelty of doctrine, deceit and falſhood in their dealing, repreſented to the world as monſters*, Luther *was forced to anſwer himſelf a printed relation of his death, how he was carried away ſoul and body by the Devil.* 7. Was not the meſſage they carried moſt oppoſit to mens carnal inclinations, to theſe principles they had ſucked in from their infancy, to the religion of their fathers, yea, in a word, had no outward encouragements, the whole world ſeemed to combine againſt them; *Luther* at his firſt appearance excommunicated by the *Pope*, preſcribed by the *Emperor*, and good *Melanchton* was oft made to faint, when he thought on ſo great a ſpeat of oppoſition, ſo that without the convoy of an extraordinary power, nothing could have looked more improbable.

SECOND Witneſs that may let the world ſee a wonderful providence in this late raiſing of the church is this, *theſe ſharp aſſaults which the church met with from a party no leſs cruel and powerful than any adverſary which the church had in the primitive times*, for I am ſure the world muſt confeſs that no ordinary means had wanted for an eſſay to cruſh the goſpel in its firſt budding forth, that both counſel and force, the authority of law, backed with greateſt rage and violence in its execution, yea, the power of the princes of the earth was put forth to the utmoſt, to withſtand this great work of God in theſe laſt ages; to clear this I ſhall only point at ſome remarkable aſſaults which did try the dawning of the goſpel, that may ſhew ſomething above nature going along with it.

1. We find a *ſpaniſh Emperor* devoted to the *popiſh intereſt*, more powerful than any who went before, brought in on *Germany* with the very firſt breaking up of the light, which might ſeem a dreadful let to the goſpel's ſpreading. 2. The riſe of the *Boors* and *Anabaptiſt* party, whoſe being ſo groſs, deſtructive to civil order, to the intereſts and proprieties of men, did look like a ſad trial, and a probable means to beget much prejudice againſt the truth. 3. That ſad overthrow of the *Duke* of *Saxony*, and *Landgrave* of *Heſſe*, who were ſuch great patriarchs to the church, did then threaten the very ruin of the *Proteſtant intereſt* in *Germany*. 4. The *Council of Trent* where the popiſh party had all their politicks on foot in a ſtrong combination, how to ruin the church. 5. The *interim*

terim of *Germany* a moſt ſubtil contrivance to divide, and thus break the ſtrength of the *Proteſtants*, was alſo a ſore aſſault, a ſnare to ſome, and cauſe of perſecution to others. 6. That *Spaniſh Inquiſition* eſtabliſhed through *Spain*, *Italy*, and the *Low Countries*, a horrid cruel engine which did reach to prevent the ſmalleſt glancings of the truth. 7. The *French Maſſacre* where not only the *Admiral*, but moſt of the conſiderable *Proteſtants* were through all *France* in a few days cut off, O would not this ſeem an irrecoverable ſtroke, together with that *Catholick League*, which did quickly follow upon the back thereof, a very ſtrong and formidable combination to root out the *Proteſtant intereſt*. 8. The taking away of *Edward* V. of *England*, and eſtabliſhing of a cruel perſecuter *Queen Mary*, did indeed look like a ſtroke that ſhould root out the church in that part, and deſtroy that famous plantation of the goſpel, in its tender growth. 9. I muſt add that which was as ſore an aſſault to the church as any, ſo grievous a difference which with the firſt breaking up of the *work* of *reformation* did begin betwixt *Luther* and *Zuinglius*, about *Chriſt's preſence in the ſacrament*, yea, came to ſuch an height, and with ſo great heat and animoſity was followed, as in appearance would have wholly fruſtrate the work they were about.

THIRD witneſs to this truth is *that wonderful patience, and reſolution of the ſaints, yea, with much chearfulneſs in their greateſt ſufferings, which in theſe late times did appear*, wherein the world muſt confeſs that ſame immediate ſupport from heaven, yea, the Lord's owning his people in a very extraordinary way, was no leſs manifeſt, than in theſe primitive ſufferings of the church from heathens. Sure no by-paſt times, even in theſe bloody days of *Nero*, *Domitian*, &c. can ſhew more horrid, more ſtrange engines of torment and cruelty, than what in theſe laſt ages the church did endure from the *popiſh party*, whoſe ſavage, and barbarous uſage of the poor flock of Chriſt, wherever they had acceſs, may witneſs a cruelty more than human, and as to the number, are they not almoſt without reckoning, who in *France*, *Germany*, *Britain*, and the *Low countries* beſide other parts, were ſlain within this 150 years, for the word of God, and the teſtimony of his truth. Now as this is moſt manifeſt, it is alſo known what a divine, and an invincible ſpirit with an aſtoniſhing courage, and reſolution, did appear in the carriage of the people of God, under this ſore perſecution, how they triumphed over their oppreſſors, and did chearfully meet death in its moſt terrible ſhape; a thing which the ſchools of *Socrates* and *Plato*, with all their rules could never reach, yea, ſhould be reckoned, amongſt the miracles of theſe latter days; anent which we would conſider theſe things.

1. That ſomething more than nature, a ſpirit and reſolution above the ordinary rate of men, yea ſome thing much above themſelves, their natural temper and diſpoſition did in their moſt extreme ſufferings oft appear, and this without the leaſt ſhadow of affectation, and deceit: I am ſure the world in theſe laſt ages, yea, the conſcience of their perſecutors, and of the greateſt atheiſts muſt witneſsthis. 2. That many of the moſt ſoft, tender diſpoſition, many women, whoſe complection would declare more weakneſs than others, yet in this late antichriſtian perſecution, did endure greateſt torments, and by ſuffering triumphed over the fury, and rage of their adverſaries, whereof we have many inſtances upon record. 3. The world hath been alſo witneſs how ſerious, and deliberate the ſaints were in this, that they made ſuffering their choice, which they could eaſily have ſhunned, at the rate of yielding ſomething in the truth, but e'er they would do this, or give the adverſary ſuch a bribe, they choiſed to embrace death, and go to a ſtake for Chriſt, even when they wanted not moſt perſwading offers to turn them aſide: for inſtance,

inſtance, I would here mention that excellent man in *Queen Mary's* time *Julius Palmer* who not only had life, but preferment offered if he would recant, to which his anſwer was, " That he had quit his living in two places " for Chriſt, and now was ready to yield his life on that accompt:" likewiſe one *William Hunter*, whom *Biſhop Bonar* did urge with many offers to recant, told him *it muſt be ſcripture, and not perſwaſions of that kind, for he reckoned all earthly things but droſs, and dung in reſpect of Chriſt*, and at the ſtake when a pardon by the ſheriff was offered upon ſuch an accompt, did peremptorily reject the ſame. *Antonius Riceto a Venetian*, ' who con-' demned for the truth, had a large offer to have his patrimony reſtored, which ' was much morgaged with debt, and make free, beſides his life, if he would ' but a little yield, and likewiſe had his ſon weeping on him for that cauſe, gave this anſwer, ' *he reſolved to loſe both children; and eſtate for Chriſt.* I ſhall add what we have related of one *Herwin*, who ſuffered in the Low-countries, to whom the magiſtrates made great intreaties with large promiſes to recant, which he wholly ſlighted, many more inſtances of this kind here might be ſet down. 4. It is known, that ſuch who were of great repute in the world, and had a large ſhare of outward things to tempt them, did in theſe laſt times moſt chearfully part with the ſame, and choice rather ſuffering for the truth: we may inſtance theſe two great witneſſes, *John Frederick* of *Saxon*, and the *Landgrave* of *Heſſe*, who under that long impriſonment by *Charles* V. bare out many ſharp aſſaults both by threatnings and offers, without yielding in the leaſt to the prejudice of the truth, yea, on this accompt did the *Duke of Saxon* forgoe with his eſtate, and dignity. *Annas Du Burg* counſellor of the parliament at *Paris* of great parts, and repute, who before *Henry* II. had an excellent ſpeech in parliament, for the proteſtant party, for which by him being impriſoned, did foregoe all his honours, and intereſts in the world, which otherways he might have brooked, and embraced death for Chriſt. The *Prince* of *Condee* at the maſſacre of *Paris*, when the king expreſly ſhewed him he ſhould within three days dye, if he did not renounce his religion, told him, *his eſtate, and life were in his hand, but e'er he renounced the truth he would quit both. Charles de Zeroton a Moravian Barron* of great intereſt and authority in the late *Bohemian* perſecution did quit all his eſtate, and poſſeſſion for the goſpel, notwithſtanding of many large offers, and perſwaſions. We find alſo in *England* the *Dutches of Suffolk*, a lady who lived in the fulneſs of the world, and pleaſures thereof, yet in *Queen Mary's* time, did quit both eſtate, and country for the truth, and on that accompt did choice a very hard lot in other parts. 5. Is it not alſo known how theſe who had been ready to faint, and be overcharged with diſcouragement, yet, at death in the extremity of their ſuffering, did ſhew a marvelous reſolution, and chearfulneſs, a thing which no atheiſt can poſſibly anſwer, and ſheweth God's very immediate ſupport. Mr. *Glover*, how ſore was he caſt down, and could feel no joy, or comfort after much wreſtling, but no ſooner did come in ſight of the ſtake, but his ſoul was filled with the joy of the Lord, and with his ſtrength, which forced him to clap his hands, and cry forth to a friend who knew his former damp, and diſcouragement. *Oh Auſtin he is come, he is come*, and thus chearfully went to death. *Thomas Hudſon* a choice chriſtian who ſuffered in *Queen Mary's* time, when at the ſtake, did ſlip ſuddenly from under the chain, to the aſtoniſhment of the people, but not for fear of death, but from the want of feeling of Chriſt, which made him full of heavineſs, but after his turning aſide, that he had got his ſoul poured out to God, he returned as one raiſed from death to life, crying out, *Now I am ſtrong, and do not care what man can do*, and thus with much

much joy, did yield up his ſpirit. Likewiſe *Annas du Burgh* whom we before mentioned being through fear, and diſcouragement drawn to recant, had no reſt in his ſpirit, until he retracted the ſame, and after did chearfully undergo death; with what marvelous reſolution did that excellent man *Doctor Cranmer put his right hand to the fire when he came to the ſtake, and ſuffered it to burn without ſhrinking, which as he ſaid he would puniſh, for ſubſcribing a recantation which was ſo much thereafter his grief.*

Laſt I muſt add, that marvelous joy, and reſolution which the ſaints in theſe late times, did in their greateſt ſufferings ſhew, is very notour, and known to the world, for their ſuffering was not in a corner, and we may ſay, hath not come ſhort of the primitive martyrs, but did witneſs the ſame ſpirit, and power accompanying them. I cannot paſs this in a general without giving ſome touch, amidſt ſuch a multitude of convincing inſtances; let us hear bleſſed *Bradford* at the ſtake, thus ſpeak to his fellow ſufferer, *be of good comfort, for we ſhall have this night a merry ſupper with the Lord.* Latimer to Ridley *we ſhall this day light ſuch a candle in* England, *as I truſt ſhall never be put out.* Mr. Sanders, *I was in priſon until I got into priſon*; and at the ſtake embracing crys, *welcome the croſs of Chriſt, welcome everlaſting life.* Doctor Farrer to a gentleman who bemoaned his death, and the painfulneſs of it *if you ſee me once ſtir in the fire, believe not my Doctrine,* as did after appear, for he ſtood without moving in the midſt of the flame. John Ardley, if *every hair of my head were a man, it ſhould ſuffer in the faith I now ſtand in,* Eliſabeth Folks embracing the ſtake cryed *farewell* world, *farewell faith, and hope, and welcome love.* Robert Aguire's ſon when at Lile in the low countries, he ſuffered with his father for the truth, in the year 1556. did cry forth at the ſtake, *behold millions of angels about us, and the heaven opened to receive us* after he had ſometime fixed his eyes on heaven, and when the fire was kindled, ſays to his father *yet a very little while and we ſhall enter into the heavenly manſion.* Mr. *Tims* an *Engliſh miniſter* in *Queen Mary*'s days thus writes to his friends, " I am going to the Biſhop's Coal-houſe but ſhall " not be long there before I be carried up to my brethren, who are gone " to heaven before me in a fiery chariot; follow you after me, where, " you ſhall find me ſinging merrily at my journeys end," *holy, holy, holy Lord God of ſabaoth. Algerius* an *Italian martyr,* thus writes from his priſon a little before his death, *Who would believe that in this dungeon I ſhould find a paradiſe ſo pleaſant, in a place of ſorrow and death, tranquility, and hope of life, where others weep I rejoyce. O, how eaſy and ſweet is his yoke!* and this he ſubſcribes from that delectable orchard of the *Leoline priſon.* Guy de Bres *the ringing of my chain hath been ſweet muſick in my eares, all my former diſcourſes were but as a blind man's colours, in reſpect of my preſent feeling. O what a precious comforter is a good conſcience.* The *Lord Henry Otto a Bohemian,* who ſuffered in the late perſecution, ſaid to the miniſter, *I was troubled, but now I feel a wonderful refreſhment, O now I fear death no longer, I will die with joy, and on the ſcaffold cryed out, behold I ſee the heavens opened, pointing with his hands at the place where others obſerved a certain brightneſs that did dazel their eyes,* and thus dyed with great chearfulneſs. I ſhall but add the laſt words of that holy, and great Mr. *Wiſhart,* who thus ſpake amidſt the fire, *the flame doth torment my body, but no whit abate my ſpirits.*

Fourth Witneſs is *theſe great, and remarkable judgements of God, which in theſe laſt times have befallen the adverſaries, and perſecutors of the church, who have been moſt notour for their oppoſition to the truth;*

wherein we muſt ſay a divine hand hath been ſo diſcernible that ordinary obſervers could not paſs the ſame without a remark, but muſt acknowledge the righteous judgment of God, that it cometh not by gueſs and at an adventure, but doth convincingly ſeal the word. This is indeed a grave ſubject wherein we ſhould be very ſerious, and ſober, for the judgments of God are a great depth, nor can we determine from events but in ſo far as they anſwer to the word; it may ſometime happen to wicked men according to the work of the righteous, but on the other hand it is a ſure truth that God is known by the judgment he executes, and in every age doth point out ſin to the world by remarkable ſtrokes, ſome great examples of judgment, which as a beacon are ſet forth for men to obſerve; and truly we may ſay theſe remarkable inſtances of the judgment of God, ſince he began to found a retreat to his church from *Babylon* are far beyond other preceeding ages, I would be ſparing to repeat what of this kind is publiſhed by others, but that in ſpeaking to this truth, I cannot paſs it in a general, whilſt there are ſo many inſtances wherein the Lord hath made himſelf known, and theſe ſuch a convincing ſeal, and confirmation of the truth, and the following relations, I dare with confidence ſay there is not any paſſage or matter of fact, here ſet down without ſome clear, and ſatisfying grounds as to the certainty thereof.

I ſhall firſt inſtance *Charles* V. whoſe undertakings for many years were followed with ſucceſs, until once he ſet himſelf to perſecute and oppreſs the church, and bathed his ſword in the blood of the *Proteſtants*, with his cruel, and unjuſt uſage of the *Duke* of *Saxony*, from which time his affairs began viſibly to decline, he is forced to fly before *Mauritius*, and ſeek a retreat in the furtheſt confines of the empire, and after broken with melancholy, and diſcontent, like another *Diocleſian*, doth reſign his empire, and turn to a private life.

Philip II. of *Spain*, one of the greateſt perſecutors of the church in theſe laſt ages, whoſe work was to root out the *Proteſtant Religion* in his dominions, and therefore ſet on foot that horrid engine of the *Inquiſition*, yet, at laſt finds all his eſſays fruſtrate, and after the loſs of many millions of treaſures, and of ſome 10000 lives by war, yea, of a conſiderable part of the *Netherlands*, and after the breaking his great *Armado* at ſea againſt the *Engliſh* by a very remarkable ſtroke from heaven, is at laſt ſmitten of the Lord in his body by a ſtrange diſeaſe, or rather a confluence of diſeaſes, which his phyſicians could neither underſtand, nor cure, his body falling out in grievous boils, whence (beſides putrid matter) there did iſſue ſuch abundance of vermin that by-ſtanders could hardly cleanſe, or endure the horrid ſmell thereof, that ſo he who had put ſo many of the ſaints to cruel torments by the Inquiſition, was himſelf tormented, for years together with unexpreſſible pain and anguiſh.

Henry II. of *France* a moſt violent enemy to the church, whilſt he had cauſed ſentence *Annas de Burgh* to death, having ſolemnly proteſted in ſuch words, *theſe eyes of mine ſhall ſee the burnt*; 'A little before the appointed time of his execution, running in the liſts with a ſpear againſt *Count Montgomery*, is pierced through the eye, with ſuch a wound, that in a ſhort time ſent him to his grave, and fruſtrate his expectation of ſeeing the death of that perſecutor,' I ſhall mention elſewhere how remarkably the judgment of God did purſue him.

Henry III. who (whilſt he was *Duke* of *Anjou*) did aſſiſt at that horrid counſel kept at St. *Cloud*, near *Paris*, where the *Maſſacre* was concluded, is ſome years after ſtobbed to death by a *Jacobin frier* in that very chamber, a thing which *Du Serres* doth twice mention with a remark, as a marvelous inſtance of the judgment of God.

The

The *Duke* of *Guiſe*, the great executioner of that *maſſacre*, with his brother the *Cardinal*, a ſpecial contriver of the ſame, are not long after killed by *Henry* III. at *Blois*, with whom they had oft joyned in counſel to root out the *Proteſtants*, and which is very obſervable, by a ſpecious ſhew of friendſhip were circumvented, and with ſolemn oaths and promiſes as treacherouſly reached as the *Admiral*, and *Proteſtants* by *Charles* IX. were at *Paris*, and theſe two who were his great counſellors, thus are dealt with, having blood meaſured out to them for blood, and treachery as they had dealt treacherouſly with the ſaints.

We find alſo the *Duke* of *Aumale* who was a joynt actor with the *Duke* of *Guiſe* in that maſſacre doth a little after fall by a ſhot off the walls at the ſiege of *Rochel*, which not only *Du Serres*, but alſo *Davilla*, who was very popiſh doth particularly relate, where we may ſee what a bloody end the great contrivers and actors of that horrid maſſacre had.

Henry IV. a prince of excellent parts and great natural accompliſhments, was followed with marvelous ſucceſs, whilſt he owned the truth, yet, after many victories, and the breaking of the *catholick league*, turns popiſh and abjures the *proteſtant religion*, but lo within a little, he is ſtobbed in the mouth by a *Jeſuit*, on which a proteſtant gentleman uſed this freedom with him, *Sir, you have denied God and his truth with your mouth, and he hath given you there a ſtroke, take heed you deny him not alſo with your heart, leſt the next ſtroke be there*, which as the *french hiſtory* ſheweth, did accordingly fall out, when he was ſtobbed by *Ravilack*, *Du Serres*'s own *Hiſtoriographer*, doth ſhew it was through the very heart, and it was too evident, that ſometimes before his death, he had turned cordial and zealous for the popiſh intereſt.

Ferdinand II. a great perſecutor of the church in *Germany*, who after his victory over *Frederick* and the *Bohemian States*, made it his work to root out the church and *Proteſtant religion* there, and turned that country unto bloody ſhambles, not ſparing any rank, who would not abjure the truth, but a ſhort time after we find the avenger of blood (in whoſe ſight that of his ſaints is precious) purſueth him, raiſeth up the *Sweeds* for an adverſary, under whoſe ſword moſt of thoſe cruel wretches, that were the *Bohemian* ſcourge do fall, turneth *Germany* and the *Emperor's* countries into a field of blood, breaketh that great army which for many years had given law to *Germany*, ſo that as ſome hiſtorians mention, an army of 24000 captains, becauſe all old expert ſoldiers was broken in the plain fields with a huge ſlaughter, yea, the violence and cruelty of the popiſh party, thus meaſured out to them, as they had meaſured to the poor church of *Bohemia* and the *Palatinate*, and *Ferdinand* the Emperor broken with breach upon breach, that men may ſee the judgment of God purſuing a bloody perſecutor.

Theſe barbarous cruel Iriſh, who of late carried on that horrid *Maſſacre* there, ſparing no proteſtants whatever was their age, or rank, without compaſſion to women or children, O how viſibly did the judgment of the Lord reach them, and for that ſavage blood ſhed, give them blood to drink in great meaſure, their chief leader *Macguier*, *Machune*, and after *Philomy Oneale* taken, publickly executed, moſt of them conſumed by the ſword, their ſpirits ſo debaſed, that a few *Engliſh* or *Scots ſoldiers* would have chaſed multitudes of them, ſo that the world might ſee divine vengeance eminently purſuing them, which in a few years did root out moſt of that cruel generation.

We have an obſervable inſtance alſo recorded of Sir *James Hamilton*, natural brother to the Earl of *Aran*, who in King *James* the Vth's time, was by the popiſh clergy promoted againſt ſuch as were then ſuſpected of favour-

favouring the proteſtant religion, in which place he was moſt terrible and cruel againſt all he could reach, yea, ſo violent that ſome of his near kinſmen were by him brought under the laſh of his power, but lo, when at his greateſt height, whilſt he is making it is work to cruſh the goſpel in its budding forth, this is made the means of his ruin, and by one of his friends whom he purſued on the account of religion, he is accuſed of treaſon, and notwithſtanding of the ſoliciation of the popiſh clergy for him, as their great patriot, he is preſently arraigned, beheaded, and quartered in the publick ſtreet of *Edinburgh*.

It is alſo known what violent perſecutors *Cardinal Beaton*, and his ſucceſſor biſhop *Hamilton* were, who were no leſs conſpicuous inſtances of the judgments of the Lord in that time, alſo what befel one fryer *Campbel*, who did bitterly rail on that excellent man Mr. *Patrick Hamilton*, when he was burnt at St. *Andrews*, to whom Mr. *Hamilton* at the ſtake in great vehemency ſaid, ‘ wicked man thou knoweſt the contrary, and haſt ſometime ‘ profeſs'd the ſame, I appeal thee to anſwer before the judgment ſeat of ‘ Chriſt, and within a few days after, (which in that time was very notour) ‘ this fryer fell ſick, and in great horror of conſcience, as one mad, died'. There are indeed many ſuch remarkable inſtances, it is known how the judgment of God did purſue theſe three great apoſtates from the truth, *Olivares* Chancellor of *France*, *Latomus*, and *Francis Spira*, who after they had quit their profeſſion, and over their light denyed the truth, died with great horror of conſcience, crying out to byſtanders, what a hell they found within them, *Du Serres* doth ſhew, how that *Chancellor* of *France* through the torment and anguiſh of his mind, cauſed the very bed to ſhake under him; but ſince there are many examples of this kind already upon record, I do the more briefly touch it; and ſhall only add ſome few which are worthy of a remark in our own land, how viſibly the Lord did purſue by his judgment ſome who had deſerted the truth, and turned oppoſers and perſecutors thereof in their promoting *antichriſtian prelacy* contrary to their former profeſſion and engagements.

1. I ſhall inſtance Mr. *Patrick Adamſon*, a preacher, once of great repute in this land, but one whom ambition and private intereſt ſwayed more than the intereſt of Chriſt, who inſinuating himſelf in the king's favour, made it his work to overturn the eſtabliſhed government and diſcipline of the church, until he got himſelf ſettled *Archbiſhop* of St. *Andrews*, and *Prelacy* by his means advanced, which the church from her firſt reformation from popery had diſclaimed, yea, in this height of his power and grandeur, turned an avowed perſecutor of his brethren; at which time he uſed to boaſt of three things that he ſaid could not fail him, *his riches*, *learning*, *and the king's favour*, but a little after, as was then moſt known, he was by the righteous judgment of God brought to this paſs, that his parts did ſo far wither and dry up, that in ſeeking a bleſſing on his meat, he could ſcarce ſpeak a few words of ſenſe, though once admired for his eloquence; as for his riches, he was forced to get charity from thoſe miniſters whom he before perſecuted; and for the King's favour, he was ſo abhorred by him, that as he himſelf profeſſed when the ſtroke of God brought him to ſome ſenſe of his condition, *he was ſure the King did care more for the worſt of his dogs, than for him*, and thus in great miſery died, caſt off by the world, whoſe favour he had only ſought, his publick acknowledgment of his guilt and apoſtacy, and of the Lord's hand purſuing the ſame, was by himſelf ſubſcribed before divers eminent and worthy miniſters of the church, who did alſo by their ſubſcription atteſt the ſame, and was afterwards printed.

It

It is alſo manifeſt how the Lord in his judgment did purſue that wretched man his ſucceſſor *Biſhop Spotſwood*, who in a more ſubtile way did endeavour the overturning the diſcipline, and liberties of the church, for ſetting up of *Prelacy*, and by underhand dealing got himſelf firſt thruſt into *Glaſgow*, and after to be *Archbiſhop* of St. *Andrews*, yea, at laſt, was *Chancellor* of *Scotland*, his eldeſt ſon a *Baron* in *Fife*, and his ſecond ſon *Preſident* of the *Seſſion*, his daughter alſo married to *Roſline*, then a conſiderable *Baron*, but let us ſee whether this ends, what an eminent example in all theſe reſpects of the judgment of God he was, and therein the propheſy of that great man Mr. *Welſh* accompliſhed, who did foretel in a letter whilſt he was priſoner at *Blackneſs*, 'that he ſhould be as a ſtone caſt out of a ſling by the 'hand of God, his name ſhould rot, and a malediction on his poſterity,' and truly this is known what became of him in the year 1638. how he was excommunicated by the church, did flee into *England*, where in great miſery he died, his eldeſt ſon Sir *John Spotſwood* was ſometime brought to beg his bread, which is known to many yet alive, his ſecond ſon was *Preſident* of the *Seſſion*, being taken at the battle of *Philip-hauch*, was beheaded at St. *Andrews*, and his grandchild young *Darzie* beheaded at *Edinburgh*, and for his daughter who was married to *Roſlin*, it is known how quickly after that eſtate was rooted out, and turned from that race.

Mr. *James Nicholſon*, one very eminent in his time for parts, and judgment in the affairs of the church; yea, once very zealous for the truth, and a great oppoſer of *Prelacy*, when it firſt began to aſſault the church, but at laſt was turned aſide by court inſinuations, gets the *Biſhoprick* of *Dunkel*, yea, turns moſt forward to promote that intereſt, but lo in a ſhort time he is ſtricken by the Lord with ſickneſs, and great horror of conſcience within, can get no reſt, his friends in vain endeavouring to comfort him, and when they would have brought phyſicians, he told them, 'his diſeaſe was of another 'kind, for which they could give no phyſick, which preſſed him more than 'his ſickneſs, that againſt ſo much light, and over the belly of his conſcience 'he had oppoſed the truth, and yielded up the liberties of the kingdom of 'Chriſt to pleaſe an earthly king, and he charged his children that nothing 'which he had acquired ſince he was *Prelate*, ſhould go amongſt the reſt of 'his eſtate, and thus in great bitterneſs and grief died,' whereupon his brother in law Mr. *David Lindſey*, then a witneſs, made ſome verſes in *Latin*.

Solatur fruſtra conjunx, ſolantur amici,
Et medicum accerſi, ſedulo quiſque jubet.
Sed dare ſolamen nemo, dare nemo ſalutem,
Te præter poterit, Rex Jacobe, *mihi,*
Quæ corpus gravat, atque animam, tantum exime mitræ
Huic caput, hujus onus me premit, & perimit.

Mr. *William Cooper*, ſometime miniſter of *Perth*, one who witneſſed much zeal againſt *Prelacy*, both by preaching and writing, in a letter to Mr. *George Graham*, who had writ to him, entreating his charity towards his own conforming, he hath theſe words. *Sir, for your ſelf I never hated you, but the courſe you are in I never loved, how dangerous is their eſtate who cannot riſe but with the fall of many, who in Chriſt have entred the right way to the miniſtry, cloſing theſe fountains which God hath opened; doing in a matter of conſcience with doubting, turns mens light to darkneſs, whence follows induration, therefore I cannot ſtand with you except to witneſs to God in my heart againſt you*, and thus ſhuts up his letter, *conſider*

your ſelf where you was, and where you now are, & quantulum ſit illud propter quod nos reliquiſti, this I ſet down to ſhew what ſometimes he was, yet ſhortly after this man turns to a *Biſhoprick*, was loathed by the godly in that time, ſome of his old friends brought his own ſermons to him, and deſired him to reconcile them with his after actings, which did viſibly affright and diſquiet him, and one day being at paſtime near to *Leith*, he was ſuddenly terrified with apprehenſion, that he ſaw armed men coming upon him; theſe who were with him told him, there was no ſuch thing, it was only a dream, whereupon he became ſilent, and fell a trembling, but after he went home, took bed and died in much anguiſh, and trouble of ſpirit, being obſerved to point oft with his finger to the earth, crying out theſe words, *a fallen ſtar, a fallen ſtar.* It was alſo known how for divers years, he had been ſeized upon with an hypochondriack diſtemper apprehending he was all glaſs, whereupon worthy Mr. *Simſon* of *Sterling*, who had ſometimes been his familiar, hearing of his court advancement had this line.

Aureus, heu, fragilem confregit malleus urnam.

A very convincing inſtance of the judgment of God in that time, was one Mr. *Andrew Foſter*, miniſter at *Dumfermling*, who being ſent *Commiſſioner* to the *Aſſembly* at *Glaſgow*, 1610. and ſolemnly adjured, as he ſhould anſwer to Jeſus Chriſt by his brethren, not to conſent to any alteration of the government of the church, yet notwithſtanding voted for *Prelacy*, having got fifty marks from the *Earl* of *Dumbar*, who made uſe of that argument to break ſome of theſe wretches, a ſmall ſum indeed to ſell the cauſe of Chriſt, and by him very dear bought, for after his return, 'he falleth in ſickneſs, 'and upon his recovery from that was ſeized with horror of conſcience, ſo 'that he run out of the pulpit whilſt he was going to preach, confeſſing he 'had ſold *Chriſt* at that *Aſſembly* for money, that being poor, and having a 'numerous family, he choſed rather to make haſte than believe, and thus 'laid aſide his miniſtry, requeſting Mr. *John Murrey*, who then was ſilenced 'by the *Biſhop*, that for Chriſt's ſake he would take the charge of that place, 'after which he fell in a great diſtraction and became in ſome meaſure mad 'and though he did ſomething recover, yet, died in great infamy, poor, 'and drowned in debt,' a very convincing example of the judgment of God. This old Mr. *Row* of *Carnock*, being then a miniſter in the ſame presbytery ſets down under his hand which he moſt certainly knew. I ſhall only add two remarkable inſtances of the Lord's judgment within theſe few years that ſhould not be paſt without a remark.

'The firſt relates to a conſiderable family in this country, who made it their 'work to trouble and perſecute the miniſter of that pariſh, an eminently 'holy and faithful man, yea, upon the account of his faithfulneſs; the old 'Laird of that houſe, out of malice doth purſue him with a falſe libel before 'the *Synod*, uſing all means he could to reproach his name, having it as his de-'ſign either to get him broken, and put out of the pariſh, or at leaſt to cruſh 'his ſpirit, and weaken him in the exerciſe of the miniſtry, but doth there 'meet with a diſappointment, the Lord clearing the innocence of his ſervant, 'and the malice of the other, ſo that even ſuch who otherways wanted not 'a prejudice at him, were forced to acknowledge this, at which time that 'Gentleman, whilſt he went to the ſtable where his horſes were, being then 'at the *Synod* upon that account, is in the place ſtricken with ſickneſs, forced 'to haſte home and take bed, and there ſeized with horror of conſcience, 'which made him oft cry, intreating moſt earneſtly for his miniſter whom 'he

'he had thus perſecuted, and oft had theſe words, *O to ſee his face*, yea, 'told his friends that if he would not come to him, they would carry him to 'his houſe, but his Lady out of malice did in a moſt rude and violent way 'hinder the miniſter's acceſs to him, and thus that poor gentleman in great 'horror and anguiſh dyed: after his death his Lady doth ſtill purſue the quar- 'rel with no leſs malice until ſhe alſo falleth ſick, and therewith had much 'terror upon her conſcience, yea, did no leſs cry out for the miniſter, who 'then was providentially abſent, ſo that ſhe was put to cry, and in that de- 'nyed, which ſhe did hinder to her poor husband, though at laſt, he came to 'her before her death, to whom ſhe with much bitterneſs confeſs'd her wrong. 'After this a young man their chaplain, who had been engaged by them to 'appear as a witneſs againſt that godly man was ſo terrified in his conſcience 'that he could get no reſt until he went to the next *Synod*, to acknowledge that 'horrid ſin, in bearing falſe witneſs againſt his *miniſter*, but being there kept 'by ſome from a publick appearance, he went to another part of the country, 'where it is certainly reported he died diſtracted. Now laſt of all the young 'Laird who did ſucceed in that eſtate, would needs purſue the quarrel, and 'finding more acceſs through the change of the time, did ſo endeavour with 'ſome who were in power, that an order was paſt for baniſhing him out of 'that pariſh, and though he was then otherways ſtaged, upon the account 'of the publick cauſe, yet, it was known the violent purſuit of that gentle- 'man was the main cauſe of this ſentence, which theſe who had a hand in 'paſſing it did themſelves confeſs, for he had ſolemnly ſworn, that if he 'lived in that place, that man ſhould not be miniſter there, but lo, a few 'days after, having returned to his houſe, and boaſting how he had kept his 'word, and now got his miniſter caſt out of the pariſh, he was ſuddenly ſtruck 'by the Lord with an high fever, which plucked him away in the very 'ſtrength of his years'. This I had related as it is here ſet down, from a grave chriſtian, the party himſelf being preſent, which he did humbly decline to relate, though he could not but aſſent thereto.

'Second is one *David Macbryar*, who was a *member* of the late *Parlia- 'ment*, being one of the commiſſioners of the *Boroughes*, a man moſt no- 'tour in the country where he lived for a lewd and groſs practice, but moſt re- 'markable and known beyond others for his violence and rage againſt the 'godly, as he ſhewed by his carriage, both in the Parliament, and afterwards 'where he could have acceſs did ſet himſelf to trouble, and perſecute ſuch 'under that reproachful name of *Fanaticks*, but within ſometime thereaf- 'ter whilſt he was forced to retire by reaſon of debt, for fear of caption, 'he was found one day walking alone by one who was then come out of 'the *North* to that country, and had ridden forth, to ſee if he could catch 'any of that party whom he judged was then lurking, and ſuppoſing upon 'his rencounter that he was ſurely one of theſe, would needs apprehend 'him, but he upon his reſiſtance, and ſtrugling againſt him was by him run 'through with a ſword, and immediately killed on the place upon that very 'account and perſuaſion, that he was a *Fanatick*, and rebel as he then term- 'ed him, thus he who had declared himſelf an enemy to the people of 'God whom he was wont in reproach to call *Fanaticks*, was himſelf under 'that very notion, and upon that ground cut down by one of his own ſtamp 'and principles'. O was not this the finger of God, and a convincing proof of his righteous judgment.

FIFTH Witneſs which holds forth the Lord's eminent appearing, and ſomething of an extraordinary power, in the late raiſing and reformation of the church from Antichriſtianiſm, is this, *that large meaſure of the ſpirit, and out-*

outletting thereof which did convincingly follow the goſpel and miniſtry of the word in theſe laſt times, a truth which we muſt ſay hath been manifeſt, and by many ſolemn proofs thereof demonſtrate, no leſs than in the firſt planting of the chriſtian church. It is undeniable how great a witneſs to the truth, the ſpirit and down-pouring thereof is, for this is God's own ſeal, which is not put to a lie or falſhood, thus he bears witneſs to his work in the hearts of his people, and by this alſo the Lord doth ſeal, and atteſt the doctrine of the church, and commiſſion of his ſervants who publiſhed the ſame, yea, at ſome ſpecial ſeaſons, when the truth hath leaſt countenance or encouragement from without, times of contradiction, when men will not receive its teſtimony, and a great ſpeate of oppoſition is to the goſpel, then hath this in a more full and large meaſure been diſcernible; thus did the Lord eminently own, and confirm the chriſtian religion in the days of the apoſtles, and for ſome following ages, by ſo great a down-pouring of the ſpirit, ſuch viſible and extraordinary effects thereof as did then aſtoniſh the world, and force men to confeſs ſomething above nature, that this was ſurely the great work and power of God; and have we not alſo cauſe to ſay, that thus the Lord hath born a very ſolemn teſtimony to his truth, the work of reformation, and doctrine of the reformed churches in theſe late times; anent which I dare appeal byſtanders, yea, the adverſaries to their conſcience, if without ſhutting their eyes, they could ſhift the conviction of a convincing appearance of God in the power and efficacy of the ſpirit, even in a more than ordinary way accompanying the word and ordinances, a power which carried kingdoms and cities before it, yea, in a very ſhort time over the belly of greateſt violence and oppoſition; to clear this a little, I ſhall point at ſome few remarkable evidences, which might ſtare the groſſeſt of men in the face, and in ſome meaſure convince them of this truth.

I. It is evident that marvelous conqueſt which the goſpel had in *Germany*, ‘ by the miniſtry of *Luther*, *Melanchton*, *Bucer*, *Martyr*, *Muſculus*, and a ‘ few others of theſe excellent inſtruments whom the Lord then ſent forth, ‘ O was not this a day of the ſpirit, and pouring forth thereof in a large ‘ meaſure, a day of the goſpel's triumph, not by might or by power, yet ‘ ſuch as before it the world could not ſtand, cities and countries might then ‘ be ſaid to be born at once, the arm of the Lord revealed with the ſame, that ‘ men were either ſcorched or truly warmed and gained thereby. Did not ‘ that marvelous power and efficacy of the ſpirit alſo attend the miniſtry of ‘ *Zuinglius* and *Oecolampadius*, in *Zurick* and *Braſil*, when ſo through a re‘ formation followed, to the throwing down of images, aboliſhing of the ‘ *Maſs* by publick authority notwithſtanding of its long continuance, and ‘ this in a ſhort time; the ſpirit and power of God did very eminently ap‘ pear alſo, in theſe famous plantations of the goſpel by the miniſtry of *Calvin*, ‘ *Farel*, and *Viret* in *Geneva*, *Lauſanna*, and other adjacent provinces. ‘ It is written in the life of *Viret*, that at *Lyons* which was a great populous ‘ city, he preached in an open place, where divers thouſands were converted ‘ to the truth, yea, ſome who came by with no purpoſe to hear, only out of ‘ curioſity ſtepped in, were ſo wrought on and overcome with the power of ‘ the word, as for that time made them neglect their other buſineſs'.

II. That great ſucceſs which did attend the miniſtry of Mr. *Wiſhart* in *Scotland*, can alſo witneſs this truth, whence ſo marvelous a change did quickly follow in theſe places through *Angus*, *Lothian*, and the weſtern parts, yea, how much the ſpirits of the people were then raiſed and affected with the word, but this being a thing ſo known from the hiſtories of that time, I only name.

III. Beſides

III. Beſides theſe which are more known, and upon publick record, ‘ I ‘ muſt here inſtance a very ſolemn and extraordinary outletting of the ſpirit, ‘ which about the year 1625. and thereafter was in the *Weſt* of *Scotland*, ‘ whilſt the perſecution of the church there was hot from the prelatick party; ‘ this by the prophane rabble of that time was called the *Stewarton Sickneſs*, ‘ for in that pariſh firſt, but after through much of that country particularly at ‘ *Irvine* under the miniſtry of famous Mr. *Dickſon* it was remarkable, where ‘ it can be ſaid (which divers miniſters and chriſtians yet alive can witneſs) ‘ that for a conſiderable time, few *Sabbaths* did paſs without ſome evidently ‘ converted, and ſome convincing proofs of the power of God accompanying his word, yea, that many were ſo choaked and taken by the heart, that ‘ through terror, the ſpirit in ſuch a meaſure convincing them of ſin, in hearing of the word, they have been made to fall over, and thus carried out of ‘ the church, who after proved moſt ſolid and lively chriſtians, and as it was ‘ known ſome of the moſt groſs who uſed to mock at religion being engaged, ‘ upon the fame that went abroad of ſuch things, to go to ſome of theſe ‘ parts where the goſpel was then moſt lively, have been effectually reached before their return, with a viſible change following the ſame, and truly this ‘ great ſpring-tide which I may ſo call of the goſpel, was not of a ſhort time, ‘ but for ſome years continuance, yea, thus like a ſpreading moor-burn, the ‘ power of godlineſs did advance from one place to another, which put a ‘ marvelous luſtre on theſe parts of the country, the ſavour whereof brought ‘ many from other parts of the land to ſee the truth of the ſame’.

IV. I muſt alſo mention that ſolemn communion at the *Kirk* of *Shots*, *June* 20. 1630. ‘ at which time there was ſo convincing an appearance of ‘ God, and down-pouring of the ſpirit, even in an extraordinary way, that ‘ did follow the ordinances eſpecially *that ſermon* on the *Monday June* 21. ‘ with a ſtrange unuſual motion on the hearers, who in a great multitude were ‘ there convened of divers ranks, that it was known, which I can ſpeak on ‘ ſure ground, near 500 had at that time a diſcernible change wrought on them, ‘ of whom moſt proved lively chriſtians afterward, it was the ſowing of a ‘ ſeed through *Clideſdeal* ſo as many of moſt eminent chriſtians in that country, could date either their converſion, or ſome remarkable confirmation ‘ in their caſe from that day; and truly this was the more remarkable that ‘ one after much reluctance by a ſpecial and unexpected providence was called ‘ to preach that ſermon on the *Monday*, which then was not uſually practiſed, ‘ and that night before by moſt of the chriſtians there was ſpent in prayer, ſo ‘ that the *Mondays* work, as a convincing return of prayer might be diſcern’d.

V. ‘ I ſhall here alſo inſtance that ſolemn and great work of God, which ‘ was in the church of *Ireland* ſome years before the fall of *prelacy* about ‘ the year 1628. and ſome years thereafter, which as many grave and ſolid ‘ chriſtians yet alive can witneſs, who were there preſent, was a bright and ‘ hot ſun-blink of the goſpel, yea, may with ſobriety be ſaid to have been ‘ one of the largeſt manifeſtations of the ſpirit, and of the moſt ſolemn times ‘ of the down-pouring thereof, that almoſt ſince the days of the apoſtles ‘ hath been ſeen, where the power of God did ſenſibly accompany the word ‘ with an unuſual motion upon the hearers, and a very great tack as to the ‘ converſion of ſouls to Chriſt, the goings of the Lord then full of majeſty, ‘ and the ſhout of a King was heard in the ſolemn meetings of his people, ‘ that as a judicious old chriſtian, who was there preſent, did expreſs it, he ‘ thought it was like a dazling beam and ray of God, with ſuch an unuſual ‘ brightneſs, as even forced byſtanders to an aſtoniſhment, a very effectual ‘ door opened, with more than ordinary enlargement, which the miniſters

'of Christ there did find in the preaching the word, whilst the people might 'be seen hearing the same in a melting frame with much tenderness of spirit; 'surely this was the very power of God, a convincing seal to the truth and 'ministry of his servants, who were then persecuted by the *Prelates*, yea, a 'thing which as it was known had an awful impression, and was a terror to 'their adversaries. I remember amongst other passages what a worthy chri-'stian told me, how sometimes in hearing the word, such a power and evi-'dence of the Lord's presence was with it, that he hath been forced to rise, 'and look through the church, and see what the people were doing, think-'ing from what he felt on his own spirit, it was a wonder how any could go 'away without some change upon them. And then it was sweet and easy 'for christians to come thirty or forty miles to these solemn communions 'which they had, and there continue from the time they came, until they 'returned without wearying, or making use of sleep, yea, but little either 'meat or drink, and as some of them professed did not feel the need there-'of, but went away most fresh and vigorous, their souls so filled with sense 'of God.

'VI. That was also a remarkable time wherein the Lord did let forth much of 'the spirit on his people in the year 1638. when this nation did solemnly 'enter in covenant, which many yet alive at this day do know, how the spi-'rits of men were raised and wrought on by the word, the ordinances lively 'and longed after, for then did the nation own the Lord, and was visibly 'owned by him, much zeal, and an enlarged heart did appear for the publick 'cause, personal reformation seriously set about, and then also was there a 'remarkable gale of providence that did attend the actings of his people, 'which did astonish their adversaries, and forced many of them to feign 'subjection. Alas, how is our night come on, for the Lord hath in anger 'covered the face of the daughter of *Zion* with a dark cloud.

VII. Must not we also say, since the land was engaged by covenant to the Lord in these late times, what a solemn outletting of the spirit hath been seen, a large harvest with much of the fruit of the gospel discernible, which we may say with a warrant, hath been proved in the inbringing of thousands to Christ, a part whereof now are in glory, and many yet live who are a visible seal to this truth, of whom I am sure some will not lose the remembrance of these sweet refreshing times, which the land for several years did enjoy of the gospel and of many solemn communions, where a large blessing with much of the spirit, and power of God was felt accompanying the ordinances; if it were expedient to set down circumstances, I could here point at many such remarkable times and places, which should clearly demonstrate this. Now besides these more publick and obvious proofs, it is known what a great testimony, the experience of the godly in these late times could give to this truth, what they have in a large measure felt of the power, and refreshing outlettings of the spirit within their soul, yea, how oft after sorest down casting have been wonderfully raised above themselves, and filled with the consolation of God and joy unspeakable; this would indeed make a great volume, to reckon over all these whose experience in these last ages could in a large measure witness this truth, only to shut this up, I shall name these two.

1. Mr. *Welsh* and Mr. *Forbes*, great witnesses of Christ in this land, when they were prisoners, give this account of their case in a letter to Mr. *James Melvin*, and his uncle then at *London*, which under the said Mr. *Melvin's* hand is set down in a manuscript of his, their words are these. *'Dear Brethren, we dare say by experience, and our God is a witness we lie not, that unspeakable is the joy, that is in a free and full testimony of Christ's royal authority,*

authority, unſpeakable is the joy of ſuffering for his kingdom (for on that truth was their ſuffering ſtated,) *we had never ſuch joy and peace in preaching of it, as we have found in ſuffering for the ſame, we ſpake before in knowledge, we now ſpeak by experience that the kingdom of God conſiſts in peace and joy,* and in another letter, thus they ſay, *our joy hath greatly abounded ſince the laſt day* (which was after paſſing ſentence of death on them by aſſize at *Linlithgow*) *ſo that we cannot enough wonder at the riches of his free grace, that ſhould have vouchſafed ſuch a gift upon us to ſuffer for his kingdom in which there is joy unſpeakable, and glorious, and we are rather in fear, that they* (to wit the ſufferings) *be not continued, and ſo we be robbed of further conſolation than that they ſhould encreaſe, ſurely there is great conſolation in ſuffering for Chriſt, we do not expreſs unto you the joy which our God had cauſed abound in us.*

II. I ſhall alſo mention that ſervant of Chriſt Mr. *Rutherfoord* whoſe letters now publiſhed can witneſs what ſolemn days of the ſpirit and ſenſible outlettings thereof, he oft had in his experience. Though books can tell but little what he really felt and enjoyed. I ſhall only ſet down ſome of his laſt and dying expreſſions, which I had from thoſe who were then preſent, and cauſed write down the ſame from his mouth, that may ſhew how lovely he was in his death, and how well that did correſpond with his former life, ſome of his words are theſe, *I ſhall ſhine, I ſhall ſee him as he is, and all the fair company with him, and ſhall have my large ſhare, it is no eaſy thing to be a chriſtian, but as for me I have got the victory, and Chriſt is holding forth his arms to embrace me. I have had my fears and faintings as another ſinful man, to be carried through creditably, but as ſure as ever he ſpake to me in his word, his ſpirit witneſſed to my heart, ſaying fear not, he had acccepted my ſuffering, and the outgate ſhould not be matter of prayer, but of praiſe,* he ſaid alſo, *thy word was found, and I did eat it, and it was to me the joy and rejoycing of my heart,* and a little before his death, after ſome fainting, he ſayeth, *now I feel, I believe, I enjoy, I rejoyce*; and turning to Mr. *Blair,* then preſent, he ſaid, *I feed on manna, I have angels food, my eyes ſhall ſee my Redeemer, I know that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day on the earth, and I ſhall be caught up in the clouds to meet him in the air,* and afterwards hath theſe words, *I ſleep in Chriſt, and when I awake I ſhall be ſatisfied with his likeneſs. O for arms to embrace him!* and to one ſpeaking anent his painfulneſs in the miniſtry; he cryeth out *I diſclaim all, the port I would be in at, is redemption and forgiveneſs of ſins through his blood.* And thus full of the ſpirit, yea, as it were overcome with ſenſible enjoyment, he breaths out his ſoul. His laſt words being *Glory, Glory dwelleth in Emanuel's land.*

SIXTH witneſs is, *that convincing appearance of an extraordinary and apoſtolick ſpirit on ſome of theſe inſtruments whom the Lord hath raiſed up in theſe laſt times, and theſe great endowments wherewith they were ſent forth for the ſervice of the Church, and the overthrow of the kingdom of Antichriſt:* a truth which we muſt ſay, if not in ſuch meaſure, yet hath been no leſs evident than in theſe primitive times, when the Chriſtian Church was planted.

It is clear that extraordinary gifts and endowments have been let forth to the Church under the New Teſtament, for with the firſt dawning of the goſpel there were both Apoſtles and Prophets raiſed up. It cannot be alſo denied that ſince the cannon of the ſcripture was cloſed, yea in theſe late ages, there hath been very extraordinary men given to the Church,

who

who had ſpecial revelations from the Lord of his mind anent things to come, which though we ſhould not now look after, yet herein did the Lord remarkably condeſcend, when ſome great piece of ſervice and neceſſity of the church did more call for it; and truly theſe were led in no other path than that of the word, though they had a more ſpecial diſcovery, and immediate inbreathing of God's mind as to the application thereof in particular caſes, neither did they preſs upon mens conſcience to credit the ſame, but were moſt cautious, witneſſing much humble ſobriety on that account.

It is known what extraordinary inſtruments, how wonderfully called, and qualified, *Luther*, *Zuinglius*, *Calvine*, Mr. *Wiſhart*, and Mr. *Knox* were, whom God ſent in theſe later days to grapple with antichriſt, and found a retreat to his church from *Babylon*, likewiſe *Melancthon*, *Beza*, *Bucere*, and *Martyr*, with divers in *England* ſuch as *Latimer*, *Ridley*, *Bradford*, &c. who indeed were burning and ſhining lights in their time, mighty in the ſcripture, fervent in ſpirit, were cloathed with the power and authority of God, before which the world could not ſtand. But beſides theſe famous witneſſes, of whoſe life we have ſomething this day on publick record, I muſt here crave liberty to ſet down a few more, more late inſtances of our own church in *Scotland* to confirm this truth, ſuch as are but little known to the world, nor any thing of their lives publiſhed, which I think a great loſs to after generations, whom we may ſay (and this with a warrant, and in ſobriety) were men truly extraordinary, eminently ſerviceable in the work of the Lord, yea, of a prophetick, and apoſtolick ſpirit, and ſuch who through grace, did not even come ſhort of the firſt three; I mean not only theſe before mentioned, but alſo ſome of theſe great lights who were in the firſt age of the church after the aſcenſion of Chriſt.

1. I ſhall inſtance Mr. *John Welſh* whom the Lord called forth to the miniſtry at *Kirckcubright* in *Galloway*, and afterwards was tranſported to the church of *Air*, whom Mr. *Rutherfoord* in one of his books calleth that heavenly prophetical and apoſtolick man of God, and ſheweth that from the witneſſes of his life, he had this accompt that of every 24 hours, he gave uſually 8 to prayer, if other neceſſary and urgent duties did not hinder, yea, ſpent many days and nights which he ſet a-part in faſting, and prayer, for the condition of the church, and the ſufferings of the reformed churches abroad, I can alſo add this, from very ſure information (and truly anent any of theſe particulars, I ſeriouſly ſtudy to have ſatisfying grounds anent the certainty thereof) that it was his uſe even in the coldeſt winter nights, to riſe for prayer, and oftimes his wife, who was an excellent woman, hath riſen to ſeek after him, where he hath been found lying on the ground weeping, and wreſtling with the Lord, yea, ſometimes would have been much of the night alone, in the church of *Air* on that accompt. One time eſpecially his wife finding him overcharged with grief, he told her he had that to preſs him which ſhe had not, the ſouls of 3000 to anſwer for, whilſt he knew not how it was with many of them. And another time whilſt ſhe found him alone, his ſpirit almoſt overcharged with anguiſh and grief, upon her ſerious enquiry, ſaid, 'that 'the times which were to come on *Scotland*, were heavy and ſad, though 'ſhe ſhould not ſee them, and this for the contempt of the goſpel. Whilſt he was priſoner in the *Blackneſs* in a letter to a chriſtian lady, he giveth this accompt *what large joy he had to ſuffer for ſuch a truth, that Jeſus Chriſt was a king, and had a viſible kingdom in the world, even his church, which was as free to keep his courts, and exerciſe diſcipline by virtue of an intrinſick power from Chriſt, as any kingdom on the earth, for which he was ready to lay down his life, yea, would rejoice to be offered up a ſacrifice on*

ſo glorious a truth, in the cloſe of that letter, he doth alſo forewarn that *judgment was coming to* Scotland *which ſhould be blood, firſt by an inteſtine ſword, and then by the ſword of a ſtranger, and that a great ſacrifice ſhould be there, both of great men, and mean,* the fulfilling whereof hath ſince been very viſible and is known by many alive, who had that letter long before the late troubles begun; whilſt he was thus priſoner, two remarkable paſſages I have had confirmed by divers worthy of credit, ſome of whom ſhewed me they had from theſe who were moſt familiar with the perſons themſelves, they are indeed ſtrange, but we muſt alſo conſider he was an extraordinary man. The 'firſt was this, that one night whilſt he did expound the ſcripture after his ſup-'per, in the priſon (as his cuſtom was,) whilſt he, with much power, and 'authority was preſſing home the truth, one of the company who had ſome 'charge in the caſtle, fell a jeering, which Mr. *Welſh* obſerving, and 'looking earneſtly to him, did preſently cloſe the *Bible*, and ceaſe, 'and a little after having a drink in his hand, he ſayeth to a friend at the ta-'ble before all that were preſent, there is one ſo profane and groſs as to 'contemn and mock at the word of the Lord, but e'er a little God ſhall ſmite 'him, with a remarkable ſtroke of his judgment, which accordingly fell out 'to the aſtoniſhment of the company, for that man did preſently drop down 'to the ground, and dyed. A *lady* that was then *popiſh* being preſent by 'reaſon of a friend of hers that was priſoner in the caſtle, was ſo moved there-'with that it proved an help to her after converſion. The other paſſage is 'this, one *John Steward*, an eminent chriſtian who lived at *Aire* having 'come to viſit Mr. *Welſh* in priſon, found him in a more than ordinary way, 'troubled, and ſad, and upon his enquiry there-anent, he ſayeth, *John*, 'ye ſhould not be here, go home to *Aire*, for the plague of God is broken 'up in that place, and cauſe *Hew Kennedy* provoſt of that town (who was 'alſo a very ſingular chriſtian) conveen the people to the ſtreets, and pray to-'gether, and the Lord ſhall hear *Hew Kenndey*, and remove that ſtroke; this 'at the firſt did ſomething aſtoniſh the ſaid *John*, and put him to queſtion its truth, 'having ſo lately come out of that place, but at his return found it ſo: and 'accordingly in every thing it fell out as the man of God had ſhewed.' After his baniſhment to which the king did change the ſentence of death paſt upon him at *Linlithgo*, he in a very ſhort time acquired the *French tongue*, with ſuch a facility therein, as was thought ſtrange by theſe who knew it; *Trochrig* in his commentary on the *Epheſians*, ſets down this paſſage, how being called to preach at *Salmur* a famous *Univerſity*, yea, one of the moſt learned auditories in *France*, he did with ſuch boldneſs and authority preach, as though he had been before the meaneſt congregation, whereat *Trochrig* being aſtoniſhed, could not but on his acquaintance with him queſtion him there-anent, whence he had ſuch confidence, and was ſo little moved, whilſt he preached before ſtrangers, ſo grave, and judicious an auditory, and in a ſtrange tongue, to whom in a humble way as one more dejected, then lifted up, he gave that anſwer, *when he conſidered his being before the Lord, and that he was delivering his meſſage, he could not regard, either great or ſmall, but all fleſh did then go out of his mind.* Whilſt he was miniſter at St. *Jane de Angeli* a proteſtant town in *France*, where his miniſtry was much bleſſed with ſucceſs, the civil wars did break up, where that city was twice beſieged on the proteſtant intereſt, during which time theſe paſſages fell out moſt remarkable, one was, the town being ſore ſtraited, and ready to be taken, the enemies having raiſed a battery, and by a cloſs approach had made a great breach in the wall, Mr *Welſh*, hearing thereof (who had much encouraged the people, that their adverſaries ſhould not then prevail) *went himſelf with the*

canonier up the walls, and desired he would charge such a piece of cannon, and shoot, for God should direct that shot, and cause it prosper, which accordingly did to the astonishment of onlookers dismount that battery, and the Lord so ordered things after, that the king did parley on favourable terms with the city, and did only himself with his court come in without doing any violence. Another marvelous passage was this, the following *Sabbath* some of the godly in that place, fearing Mr. *Welsh* his hazard, did seriously deal with him that he would forbear to go forth and preach, the court being there, from which he by no intreaty would be hindered, but shewed them, 'he would adventure to preach the word to his people, and trust the Lord with 'what concerned himself, being more grieved at their fear, and despond-'ence, and that day had a very great auditory both of friends, and others, 'who came upon the fame of such a man, but in time of sermon, a great 'man of the court, with some of the king's own guard was sent to bring him 'forthwith before the king, and whilst he was entring the church which had 'some difficulty by reason of the multitude,' Mr. *Welsh* did turn himself toward that entry, and desired the people to give way to one of the great *Piers* of *France* that was coming in, but after whilst he was coming near the pulpit, to execute his commission, by putting force on the servant of Christ, for his desisting, he did with great authority speak to him, before all the people, 'and 'in the name of his master Jesus Christ charged him that he would not di-'sturb the worship of God; wherewith that man was so affrighted that he 'fell a shaking, yea was forced to crutch down, and make no further trouble.' A third passage no less remarkable was upon the close of sermon, whilst Mr. *Welsh* with much submission, went to the king who was then greatly incensed, and with a threatning countenance asked, what he was, and how he durst preach heresy so near his person, and with such contumacy carry himself, to which with due reverence bowing himself he did answer. 'I am Sir, the servant, and minister of Jesus Christ, whose truth I 'preached this day, which if your majesty rightly knew, ye would have judged 'it your duty to have come your self, and heard, and for my doctrine I did 'this day preach these three truths to your people. 1. That man is fal-'len, and by nature in a lost condition, yea, by his own power, and abili-'ties is not able to help himself from that estate. 2. That there is no 'salvation, or deliverance from wrath by our own merits, but by Jesus Christ 'and his merit alone. 3. I did also preach this day the just liberties of 'the *kingdom* of *France*, that your *majesty* oweth obedience to *Christ* only, 'who is head of the *Church*, and that the *Pope*, as he is an enemy to *Christ*, 'and his truth, so also to the *kings* of the earth, whom he keepeth under sla-'very to his usurped power.' Whereat the king for a time keeping silence with great astonishment turned to some about him, and said, *surely this is a man of God.* Yea, after did commune with him, and with great respect dismissed him. The year following whilst the differences betwixt the *king* and *Protestant* party did grow, that city was besieged, taken and in part sacked as Mr. *Welsh* did publickly foretel, at which time, it is known, how the king past a solemn order, that none should in the least wrong Mr. *Welsh*, or any thing that belonged to him under highest pains, and did after give a safe conduct to him, for transporting himself to *England* where he died, *King James* refusing his return to his own country, though earnestly petitioned by his wife for her husband's health. During his sickness he was so filled, and overcome with the sensible enjoyment of God, that he was sometime overheard in prayer, to have these words, *Lord, hold thy hand, it is enough, thy servant is a clay vessel and can hold no more.*

II. I shall also here instance Mr. *Robert Bruce* who in a very extraordinary way was called to the ministry, having for a long time followed the study of the law, both in this country, and in *France*, yea, had some ground to expect a place amongst the lords of the session, his father being then a considerable barron, who had many friends, but a more pressing, and irresistible call from God did otherwise determine. 'Whilst he was in the ministry at *Edin-*
'*burgh* he shined as a great light though the whole land, the power and effi-
'cacy of the spirit most sensibly accompanying the word he preached, he was
'a terror to evil doers, and the authority of God did so appear upon him, and
'his carriage, with such a majesty in his countenance, as forced fear, and
'respect from the greatest in the land, even these who were most avowed
'haters of godliness, yea, it was known what an awful impression *King*
'*James* had of him, and hid once give him that testimony before many, that
'he judged Mr. *Bruce* was worthy of the half of his kingdom. He was a
'man that had much inward exercise about his own personal case, had been
'oft assaulted anent that great foundation of truth, if there was a God, which
'cost him many days, and nights wrestling, and when he came up to the
'pulpit, after being sometime silent, which was his usual way, he would have
'said *I think it is a great matter to believe that there is a God*, telling the
'people, it was another thing to believe that, than they judged. But it was
'also known, by his friends with whom he was familiar, what extraordinary
'confirmations he had from the Lord therein, what near familiarity he did at-
'tain in his secret converse with God, yea, truly some things I have had from
'persons worthy of credit there anent, would seem so strange, and marvelous,
'that I forbear to set them down.' The great success of his ministry at *Edinburgh*, *Innerness*, and other places whether providence called him, is abundantly known, whilst he was confined at *Innerness* that poor dark country was marvelously enlightned, many brought into Christ by his ministry, and a seed sown in these places, which even to this day is not wholly worn out. 'I
'shall here set down one passage of famous Mr. *Henderson* who at his first
'entry to the ministry at *Leuchars*, was very prelatick, and by the Bi-
'shop of St. *Andrews* brought in against the parishes consent, so that the day
'of his admission, the church doors being shut by the people, they were for-
'ced to break in by a window to get him entrance, but a little after this, up-
'on the report of a communion where Mr. *Bruce* was to help, he would needs
'from a longing he had to hear and see such a man, go secretly there; and
'placed himself in a dark part of the church where he might not be known,
'when Mr. *Bruce* was come to the pulpit he did for a considerable time keep
'silence as his manner was, which did some way astonish Mr. *Henderson*, but
'much more when he heard the first *words wherewith he* begun, which were
'these, *He that cometh not in by the door, but climbeth up another way,*
'*the same is a thief and a robber*; which did by the Lord's blessing at the
'very present take him by the heart, and had so great an impression on him,
'that it was the first mean of his conversion.' He was one that had the
'spirit of discerning in a great measure, did prophetically speak of many
'things which afterwards came to pass, yea, which I had attested by sober,
'and grave christians, who were familiar with him, that divers persons distract-
'ed, and of these who were passed all hope of recovery in the falling sickness,
'were brought to Mr. *Bruce* and after prayer by him in their behalf were ful-
'ly recovered: this indeed may seem strange, but it is also true, Mr. *Bruce*
'was a great wrestler who had more than ordinary familiarity with his master.
'A little before his death when he was at *Edenburgh* and through weakness
'kept his chamber, there was a meeting of divers godly ministers at that time

'there,

'there, on ſome ſpecial ground of the church's concernment, who hearing he 'was in the town came together, and gave him an account of the actings 'of theſe times, the prelates then deſigning the ſervice book, after which 'Mr. *Bruce* prayed, and did therein tell over again to the Lord the very ſub-'ſtance of their diſcourſe, which was a ſad repreſentation of the caſe of 'the church, at which time there was ſuch an extraordinary motion 'on all preſent, ſo ſenſible a down-pouring of the ſpirit, that they could 'hardly contain themſelves, yea, which was moſt ſtrange, even ſome unuſual 'motion on theſe who were in other parts of the houſe, not knowing the 'cauſe at that very inſtant, one Mr. *Weemes* of *Lothaker* being then occa-'ſionally preſent, when he went away, ſaid, O how ſtrange a man is this, for 'he knocked down the ſpirit of God on us all, this he ſaid becauſe Mr. *Bruce* 'did divers times knock with his fingers on the table; I had this from a worthy 'chriſtian gentleman in whoſe mother's houſe this was. He was deeply af-'fected with the naughtineſs and prophanity of many miniſters then in the 'church, and the unſuitable carriage of others to ſo great a calling, and did 'expreſs much his fear that the miniſtry of *Scotland* would prove the great-'eſt perſecutors of the goſpel that it had. If there were a full collection of 'theſe remarkable paſſages, which have been known to others in his life, it 'would further witneſs what an extraordinary man that was. I ſhall only 'ſhut this up with learned *Didoclavius*'s teſtimony in his preface to his '*Altare Damaſcenum*, Robertus Bruſius', *Vir genere & virtute nobilis, majeſtate vultus venerabilis, qui plura animarum millia Chriſto lucrifecit, cujus anima, ſi ullius mortalium, abſit verbo invidia, ſedet in cœleſtibus, anima mea, cum anima tua*, Bruſi, *ſi ex aliena fide eſſet pendendum*

III. *Mr. Davidſon*, miniſter of the goſpel at *Salt-Preſtoun*, may be truly 'here inſtanced as one of an extraordinary prophetick ſpirit, who was like-'wiſe eminently zealous and faithful for his maſter in a time of the church's 'defection, as *Didoclavius* in that forementioned preface terms him; *Cato '& conſtans Cato ſui temporis*. He did then foreſee prelacies breaking in upon 'the church, when King *James* was preſſing the ſetting up of ſuperintendents 'under a very ſpecious pretext, and was for that end himſelf at the Aſſembly 'in *Dundee*, having engaged many, alaſs too many to conſent thereto, but 'Mr. *Davidſon* with great boldneſs roſe up, and warned the Aſſembly of 'the hazard, and told them he ſaw the knave Biſhop, with his miter com-'ing in under that maſk, yea, did ſolemnly in his own name, and in the 'name of the church of *Scotland*, enter a proteſtation againſt that ſtep of 'defection, and their yielding up in ſo far the liberties of the church to 'pleaſe men. Whilſt he was miniſter at *Salt-Preſtoun*, the building of 'a church was by him much endeavoured, which he did advance much out 'of his own private intereſt, my Lord *Newbatle* who then had a great in-'tereſt in the pariſh, engaging to help it forward; from which he after re-'ſiled, and thereby fruſtrated the work. Whereupon Mr. *Davidſon* told 'him, theſe walls that were then begun to be builded, ſhould ſtand as a wit-'neſs againſt him, and that ere long God ſhould root out him, and his eſtate 'out of that pariſh, and he ſhould not have a piece of land in the ſame, which 'ſhortly after had a viſible accompliſhment. It was very clear from many 'paſſages of his life, that the ſecret of the Lord was in an extraordidinary 'way with him. Some of theſe which have been tranſmitted from them 'who particularly knew the ſame are indeed moſt worthy of a remark. At 'a certain aſſembly of the church Mr. *John Spotſwood*, and Mr. *James 'Law*, who were then entred into the miniſtry, were proceſſed for ſome 'groſs acts of prophanity, where Mr. *Davidſon* finding the aſſembly too eaſy

' to paſs the ſame in regard of their parts and gifts, only with a rebuke, he ' did with much vehemency preſs their depoſition, and after being croſs'd ' therein, ſaid, you will needs ſpare theſe two men, whereat I am grieved, ' but the time is coming when they ſhall trample upon your necks, and upon ' the church of *Scotland*. And it is well known what an accompliſhment ' this prediction had'.

' Being with Mr. *Bruce* one time at dinner, who was then in great favour ' with the King, he had theſe words in giving thanks after meat'. *Lord, thy ſervant here is now a great favourite of the Court, and in much reſpect, but he ſhall be within a little as much perſecuted as he is now in favour, and go down the ſtreets when many who have him this day in eſteem will not give him a ſalutation*, which was very manifeſt afterwards. And at an other time whilſt Mr. *Robert Bruce*, and he were dining together in the houſe ' of one of the magiſtrates of the town, who was then a cordial friend to godly ' miniſters, he did alſo in his plain and free way break forth with theſe words, ' whilſt he was giving thanks', *Lord, this good man hath reſpect for thy ſake to thy ſervvnts, but he little knoweth that in a ſhort time he muſt carry us both who are here to priſon*, which words did much trouble that honeſt man, though afterwards it came moſt exactly to paſs. There is one more remarkable paſſage which I ſhould fear to ſet down, it is ſo ſtrange, but that I had the ſame confirmed by ſome worthy of credit, who ſhewed me that from theſe that were preſent and familiar with Mr. *Davidſon* they had it related. *A Gentleman nearly related to a great family of that pariſh, but a moſt violent hater of piety, did upon that account beat a poor honeſt man who lived there, having not the leaſt ſhadow of provocation, and amongſt other ſore ſtrokes gave one upon the back with theſe words*, take this for *Mr.* Davidſon's ſake, *after which the honeſt man was for a time forced to keep his bed, and complained moſt of that ſtroke which he gave him on the back, as that which he felt more than all the reſt; but the ſabbath following*, Davidſon *ſpeaking in the cloſe of his ſermon concerning the oppreſſion of the godly, and enmity which wicked men had to ſuch, did very particularly touch that late inſtance*, ſaying, *It was a ſad time, a prophane man would thus openly adventure to vent his rage againſt theſe who were ſeekers of God in the place, whilſt he could have no cauſe but the very appearance of his image, and with great authority ſaid, He who hath done this, were he the Laird, or the Lairds brother, ere a few days paſs, God ſhall give him a ſtroke that all the monarchs of the earth dare not challenge, which was then publickly known how in the cloſe of that very week, ſtanding before his door, he was ſtruck dead with a thunder-bolt and all his bones cruſhed.* A little before the death of this great ſervant of Chriſt, having an occaſional rencounter with Mr. *John Ker*, a youug gentleman who was lately come from *France*, and had then no thoughts of the miniſtry, but was in a very courtly dreſs, *Mr.* Davidſon *did in a ſolemn way charge him to caſt off his ſcarlet cloak, and lay aſide his guilded rapper, and take him to his book, for you are the man, ſays he, who is to ſucceed me in the miniſtry at this place, which was very aſtoniſhing to that gentleman for the preſent, yet accordingly fell out, he did immediately ſucceed him there, where he was for many years an holy and faithful miniſter of the goſpel. This laſt paſſage many yet alive who had the ſame from the ſaid Mr.* John Ker *can witneſs.*

IV. ' Mr. *Patrick Simpſon*, who was once a miniſter of *Cramond*, and ' after tranſported to *Stirling*, may be here alſo inſtanced, as a very extraor- ' dinary man in the church, in his youth he attained to great knowledge in the ' languages, did much ſtudy *Greek* and *Latin* Authors, and gave this reaſon

'to ſuch who wondred he ſhould ſpend ſo much time in reading theſe who 'were but *Pagans*, that he purpoſed to dedicate all theſe jewels which he 'borrowed from the *Egyptians*, to the building of the houſe of the Lord, it 'is known with what zeal he did oppoſe himſelf to the corruptions of that 'time, in the year 1584. whilſt there was an expreſs charge from the King, 'for acknowledging Mr. *Patrick Adamſon* Archbiſhop of St. *Andrews*, or 'elſe loſe their maintenance; he did with great vehemency appear againſt the 'ſame, though that man was his uncle upon the mother's ſide, and ſome who 'ſeemed willing to ſubſcribe thereto with ſuch a condition *according to the 'word of God*, he did gravely rebuke, ſhewing them it could be no *ſalvo* 'to their conſcience, ſince it was *repugnantia in adjecto*, to ſubſcribe to any 'human inſtitution according to the word, when the word did expreſly con-'demn the ſame. It was alſo known, he refuſed the offer of a biſhoprick, 'and afterwards of a yearly penſion from the King, which he looked on as a 'deſign only to bribe his conſcience, which was more dear to him than all 'the world; and when that Aſſembly at *Aberdeen* was condemned by the 'ſtate, he did openly own and avow the ſame, and in a very ſolemn manner 'denounced the wrath and judgment of God againſt theſe accuſers, and con-'victers of theſe excellent men, at *Linlithgo*, who ſtood for the liberty 'of that aſſembly; that notable paper and proteſtation given in to the 'Parliament 1606 (where prelacy was further eſtabliſhed) was by him 'pen'd and out of his own hand given to the Earl of *Dunbar*, ſubſcribed 'by many miniſters of the church who were then there on that account. His 'life was moſt exemplary for piety and faithfulneſs in ſerving his maſter, 'which did preach no leſs to that part of the country wherein he lived than his 'doctrine, one very remarkable paſſage of his life I do here adventure to ſet 'down, having very ſatisfying grounds as to the certainty of it, from theſe 'who knew the ſame, and had a particular relation of all its circumſtances 'from a grave chriſtian who had it out of his own mouth, and likewiſe hath 'it written under old Mr. *Row* of *Carnock's* hand, who was his familiar in-'timate friend; it is this. *His wife Martha Barron* a gracious woman, 'the wife of his youth with whom he had lived in great love, fell ſick, 'which proved her laſt ſickneſs, where ſhe was firſt ſore aſſaulted by the 'Devil, who preſſed in upon her that ſhe ſhould be given over to his hand, 'and after it did reſolve in a viſible diſtraction which for a time grew upon 'her, ſo that moſt like to her former way, ſhe would have broke forth with 'dreadful and horrid expreſſions, it did moſt appear on a ſabbath morning 'whilſt Mr. *Simpſon* was going to preach, and whilſt for a time he was 'forced with a heavy countenance to ſtand ſilent, he at laſt kneeled down, 'and prayed, which ſhe did no ways regard, but a little after he turning to 'the company that were preſent, told them he was ſure that theſe who now 'were witneſſes of that ſad hour, ſhould yet ſee a gracious work of God on 'this his ſervant, and that the Devil's malice againſt that poor woman, 'ſhould have a ſhameful foil; her diſtraction did ſtill continue until the 'Tueſday which was the ninth of *Auguſt*, which morning at the very 'dawning of it, he goeth to his garden and ſhut the door behind him 'where for many hours he was alone, but a godly woman who that 'night was with his wife, *Helen Garner*, wife to one of the Bailies of 'Stirling, being apprehenſive of his hazard, through his grief and faſting, 'could have no reſt till ſhe knew his caſe, and by ſome help climbed 'up, and got into the garden, but on a near approach to that place, where 'Mr. *Simpſon* then was, ſhe was terrified with an extraordinary noiſe, which 'through fear made her fall to the ground, it ſeemed as ſhe related after to

'others

'others, it was like the noiſe of a great ruſhing of multitudes together, and 'therewith ſuch a melodious ſound, as did make her know it was ſome-'thing more than human, and turned to prayer entreating the Lord would 'pardon her raſhneſs, which affection to his ſervant who had been the in-'ſtrument of her good, carried her to; and after going forward finds him 'lying upon the ground, it was with much entreaty that he did then reveal 'himſelf in that particular, until ſhe promiſed cloſeneſs, not to ſpeak it to 'others ſo long as he lived, but had his allowance if ſhe ſhould ſurvive him, 'which promiſe ſhe kept, but after his death, did relate it to theſe from 'whom I have had this, he ſaid, *O what am I being duſt and aſhes that the holy miniſtring ſpirits ſhould be ſent by the Lord to deliver a meſſage to me*, and ſhewed he had a viſion of angels, who did with an audible voice 'give him an anſwer from the Lord of his wifes condition, and coming 'over to his houſe, he ſaid to all who were preſent, be of good comfort, for 'ere ten hours of this day I am ſure that brand ſhall be plucked out of the 'fire, after which he went to prayer at his wifes bedſide, where for a time 'ſhe lay quiet, but whilſt he mentioned *Jacob's* wreſtling in prayer, ſhe ſits 'ſtraight up in the bed, caſting aſide the curtain, and ſayeth;' *thou art this day* Jacob, *who haſt wreſtled and alſo prevailed, and now God hath made good his words, which he ſpake this morning to you, for I am plucked out of the hands of Satan, and he ſhall have no power over me.* 'Which interrup-'tion made him for a ſpace ſilent, but after with great melting of heart 'proceeded in prayer, and magnified the riches of God's love towards him; 'and after prayer there was ſweet and chriſtian embracements betwixt them, 'yea, from that hour ſhe did ſpeak moſt chriſtianly and comfortably even to 'her death, which was on the *Friday* following, *Auguſt* 13. 1601. whoſe 'laſt words in the moment of her departure were with a loud voice, *Come Lord, in thy hands I commend my ſpirit.* 'After this Mr. *Simpſon* lived 'ſeveral years fervent, and faithful in the work of the Lord, and one who 'in private walk witneſſed ſuch mortification, that all who knew him might 'clearly ſee, his converſe was little in the world, in *March* 1618. he ſaid now 'ſhall this month put an end to all theſe things, and accordingly towards the 'cloſe of it was removed by death, at which time he expreſſed much joy, 'bleſſing the Lord for his kindneſs, that he had not been perverted by 'the ſinful courſes of theſe times, and might ſay as the Lord fed *Elijah* in 'the wilderneſs, ſo in ſome reſpect he had dealt with him all his life-time, 'and having theſe words upon ſome of his books written, *Remember O my ſoul, and never forget the 9th of* Auguſt, *what conſolation the Lord gave thee, and how he performed what he ſpake, according to* Zach. iii. 2. *is not this a brand plucked out of the fire*, upon which ſome of his friends ſpeaking to him anent the ſame, his anſwer was, *Abſit mihi gloriari in aliquo, niſi in Domino Deo meo.*

Now beſides theſe great men, many others who at that time did ſhine as lights in the church may be here alſo mentioned, who were indeed ſtars of the firſt magnitude, eminently zealous and faithful, and their miniſtry followed with much of the power and authority of God, ſuch as Mr. *Andrew Melvin*, of whom it might be ſaid, he had the face of a lion in his maſter's cauſe, and feared not to ſpeak before princes and great men, when the truth called for it; likewiſe his nevoy Mr. *James Melvin*, that holy grave and prudent ſervant of Chriſt, *Andrew Dunkan*, Mr. *John Scrimger*, Mr. *Charles Fereme*, Mr. *James Balfure*, &c. One paſſage I ſhall here ſet down worthy of a re-mark of Mr. *Andrew Melvin*, who being a priſoner in the *Tower*, a gen-tleman of his acquaintance got acceſs to viſit him, but found him in a ſad deep

muſe, anent the defection of many miniſters in *Scotland*, and did deplore the ſtate of the church there, having lately got an account of their way at that Aſſembly at *Glaſgow* 1610. where the Earl of *Dunbar* had been active to corrupt divers with money: this gentleman deſiring to know what word he had for his own country got no anſwer, but upon a ſecond enquiry he ſaid, *I have no word to ſend, but am heavily grieved, that the glorious government of the church of* Scotland *ſhould be ſo defaced, and a popiſh tyrannical government ſet up, and thou* Manderſton (for out of that houſe *Dunbar* was come, and he thus ſtiled him) *Haſt thou no other thing to do but carry down to* Scotland *ſuch commiſſions whereby the poor church there is wracked; the Lord ſhall be avenged upon thee, and thou ſhalt never again go down for all thy grandeur;* which words took ſuch impreſſion on that gentleman, that when he went forth he deſired ſome friends, who then waited to get a buſineſs at court exped by *Dunbar's* moyen, that they would in time put their affairs to a cloſe, for he was perſuaded the words of that ſervant of Chriſt ſhould not fall to the ground, and truly this did very quickly take place, that Earl being ſuddenly ſtruck by death within a few months after, and thus thrown down from the top of his grandeur, whilſt he was buſy, perfecting that great houſe of his at *Berwick*, and had appointed a ſumptuous feaſt for his daughters marriage, even then did his thoughts periſh.

I ſhall here but add one inſtance more of one whom we before named, though not a miniſter, yet a great inſtrument for promoting the work of the goſpel in the place he lived, and one we may ſay, of an extraordinary ſpirit, *Hew Kennedy* provoſt of *Aire*, of whom I would mention theſe two paſſages from ſure knowledge, *One was whilſt the merchant ſhips of that town were at ſea, amongſt whom his ſon* John, *who was alſo a choice chriſtian, was at that time he did one night riſe before the breaking of day, and came to the houſe of his familiar friend* John Steward, *deſiring he would riſe, and go along with him to ſome room; whereat the ſaid* John *being exceedingly aſtoniſhed, he ſaith to him; it is no time to linger, let us go pray, for my ſon with the reſt of our friends now at ſea are at this hour on the very nick of periſhing, and after they had ſpent ſome time in prayer, he aroſe chearfully and ſaid now they are ſafe. Within a little after* John Steward *who had writ this down, with the day and hour, at the return of the ſhips, did moſt particularly enquire and found how it did anſwer in all the circumſtances, and in that very hour of that night, they were to appearance paſt hope of ſafety upon a very dangerous place, and by an extraordinary unexpected providence then delivered.*

The other is this, one day being for many hours alone in prayer, whilſt ſome of his chriſtian friends did wait long for him, at laſt, with an unuſual chearfulneſs he came forth, and upon their enquiry anent his ſtay, he told them, it was no wonder, for he had that day got mercy to him, and all his, and truly it was very evident, that not one of his children, but there was large ground of charity that they were truly godly.

Whilſt he was dying, Mr. *Ferguſon* a godly miniſter, ſayeth to him, you have cauſe, Sir, to be aſſured that the angels of God are now waiting at the ſtoops of this bed to convoy your ſoul into *Abraham's* boſom, to whom his anſwer was, *I am ſure thereof, and if the walls of this houſe could ſpeak, they could tell how many ſweet days I have had in ſecret fellowſhip with God, and how familiar he hath been with my ſoul.* I ſhall only add Mr. *Welſhes's* teſtimony in a letter from *France* to this great man, his words were theſe, *Happy is that city, yea, happy is that nation that hath a* Hew Kennedy *in it, I have my ſelf certainly found the anſwers of his prayers from the Lord in my behalf.*

(5) I. Reader, beſides theſe more remarkable paſſages which in the peruſal of this treatiſe thou wilt find dropped apart, concerning the way of God with ſome of his more eminently faithful ſervants, I have in this place caſt together ſome few inſtances which in the former impreſſion were not hinted.

In the firſt place thou mayeſt take notice of theſe two, concerning that walker with God, great maſter *Bruce*, of whom ſome things have been ſpoken elſewhere, and firſt, beſide that bleſſed frame of ſpirit which appeared in the whole of his converſe, he endeavoured eſpecially, whenſoever he was to appear in publick as an ambaſſador of Jeſus Chriſt, to have his ſpirit deeply impreſſed with the majeſty of that God of whom he was to ſpeak, and of the high import it was to the ſouls of men to have the myſteries of ſalvation unfolded unto them, not with enticing words of man's wiſdom, but in demonſtration of the ſpirit and power, without which this preached goſpel tho in it ſelf the word of life will never prove the power of God to ſalvation: And therefore though he was known to take much pains in ſearching the ſcripture, that he might know the mind of the ſpirit of God, by comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, and in preparing appoſite matter for the edification of his hearers, which he durſt not neglect, and wherein he durſt not be overly as knowing he was to ſpeak of God, and afraid of the curſe threatned for doing his work negligently; yet this was the leaſt part of his preparation-work, the main of his buſineſs lay in having his ſoul wrought up to ſome ſuitableneſs of frame for preaching the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and making manifeſt the myſtery of the goſpel as he ought, that ſo his maſter by his ſervice might ſee of the travel of his ſoul and be ſatisfied. And knowing that the ſucceſs of preaching depended wholly upon the preſence of God accompanying the diſpenſing of ordinances, his manner was to be much in prayer and ſupplication in private before his publick appearances, pouring forth his heart before God, and wreſtling with him not ſo much for aſſiſtance to the meſſenger as the meſſage. One inſtance whereof take as followeth: Being to preach at a ſolemn occaſion he was long in coming to the congregation, ſome of the people beginning to weary, and others wondering at his ſtay, the bells being long rung, and the time far ſpent, the *Beddal* was deſired to go ſee what the matter meant, who coming to his houſe, and finding his chamber door ſhut, and hearing a ſound, drew near, and liſtening, overheard Mr. *Bruce* often with much ſerioufneſs ſay, *I proteſt I will not go, exeept thou go with me.* Whereupon the man ſuppoſing that ſome perſon had been with him, withdrew without knocking at the door, who being asked at his return by a gentleman the cauſe of his delay anſwered, he could not tell, but I ſuppoſe ſaid he there are ſome with Mr. *Bruce* who are unwilling to come to church, and he is ſo preſſing and peremptory to have them come along, that I overheard him proteſt moſt ſeriouſly he would not go if they went not with him. However a little after Mr. *Bruce* came accompanyed with no man, but he came in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of Chriſt, and his ſpeech and his preaching was in ſuch evidence and demonſtration of the ſpirit, that by the ſhining of his face and that ſhower of divine influence, wherewith the word ſpoken was accompanyed, it was eaſy for the hearer to perceive that he had been in the mount with God, and that he had indeed brought that God whom he had met with private into his mother's houſe, and into the chambers of her that conceived him. Nay, he preached ordinarily with ſo much life and power, and the word ſpoken by him was accompanyed with ſuch a manifeſt preſence, that it was evident to the hearers he was not alone at the work, but that in his ſtrivings to perſuade the things which did belong to the kingdom of God, and to preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus he laboured

thereunto, ſtriving according to his working which wrought in him mightily: For though he was no boanrages as to his voice, being of a ſlow and grave delivery, yet he ſpoke with ſo much authority and weight (as becomes the Oracles of God) that ſome of the moſt ſtout-hearted of his hearers were ordinarily made to tremble; and by having theſe doors which formerly had been bolted againſt Jeſus Chriſt as by an irreſiſtible power broke open, and the ſecrets of their heart made manifeſt, they went away under convictions, and carrying with them undeniable proofs of Chriſt ſpeaking in him, and that God was with him of a truth.

The other paſſage which I preſent thee with is concerning his death. Being now aged and through infirmity of body confined to his chamber where he was frequently viſited by his friends (to whom a converſation in heaven and the abundant grace of God in him had indeared him) and being asked by one of them how matters now ſtood betwixt God and his ſoul, he (with that ſeverity of ſoul which is the effect of the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart and that plerophory under which ſuch walkers with God and workers of righteouſneſs as he was, are frequently taken off the ſtage) made this return, *When I was a young man*, ſaid he, *I was diligent and lived by faith in the ſon of God, but now I am old and am not able to do ſo much, yet he condeſcends to feed me with lumps of ſenſe.*

And that morning before the Lord removed him (his ſickneſs then being moſtly a weakneſs through age) he came to break-faſt at his table; and having as he uſed eaten one ſingle egg, he ſaid to his daughter, I think I am yet hungry ye may bring me another egg, but inſtantly thereafter falling into a deep meditation and after having muſed a while; he ſaid, *Hold daughter hold, my maſter calls me*, with theſe words his ſight failed him, whereupon he called for the Bible; but finding his ſight gone he ſaid, caſt up to me the eighth chapter to the *Romans*, and ſet my finger on theſe words, *I am perſwaded that neither death nor life*, &c. *ſhall be able to ſeparate me from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus my Lord.* Now, ſaid he, is my finger upon them, when they told him it was, without any more he ſaid, *Now God be with you my children, I have breakfaſted with you and ſhall ſup with my Lord Jeſus Chriſt this night:* and ſo gave up the ghoſt, death ſhutting his eyes that he might ſee God. Thus that valiant champion for the truth, who in his appearing to plead for the crown and intereſt of Jeſus chriſt knew not what it was to be daunted by the face and frowns of the higheſt and moſt incenſed adverſaries, was by his maſter taken off the field as more than a conqueror, and as the reward of much faithful diligence about the ſouls of others, and much pains and ſerioufneſs about making his own calling and election ſure, had an enterance miniſtred unto him abundantly into the everlaſting Kingdom of his Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

II. In the next place, Reader, I ſhall, in proſecution of my deſign which is thy edification, hint to thee ſome things concerning that burning and ſhining light, Mr. *John Welſh*, 'whoſe name is ſo famous and ſavory for the 'great things which God did by him and for him, that I ſhould much diſap-'point thy expectation if in making mention of him, I ſhould not acquaint 'thee with ſomething rare and extraordinary; and therefore though it be be-'ſide my deſign to give thee the full hiſtory of his or the reſt of theſe great mens 'lives, yet, that I may not altogether fruſtrate thy expectation take theſe few 'remarkable paſſages which follow. As firſt, an eminently holy miniſter yet a-'live and deſervedly of eſteem in the church of Chriſt told me from certain 'knowledge, that two men coming with packs of cloath to the town of *Air*

'from a neighbouring place, *&c.* where there was yet no ſuſpicion that the 'Lord's hand had ſmitten it with the plague, which was then ſore in the land, 'the centry at the bridge held them out, notwithſtanding they had a paſs, till 'the magiſtrate came; who though he could not diſprove their paſs, yet would 'not permit them to enter the town, till he ſent for Mr. *Welſh*: ſo the bailey bids 'them disburden their beaſts, till he conſidered what was to be done; a little after 'Mr. *Welſh* coming, the magiſtrate ſays to him, Sir, Here are men come from 'ſuch a place, we have heard of no plague there; beſides, they have a paſs from 'known men, what ſhall we do? Mr. *Welſh* made no anſwer but uncovering his 'head, ſtood in the midſt of the company which then followed him, and hav-'ing his eyes directed to heaven (yet ſpeaking nothing) near half a quarter 'of an hour, at laſt ſaid, *Bayly*, cauſe theſe men put on their packs again and be 'gone, for if God be in heaven, the plague of God is in theſe packs. Theſe men 'returned and opened their packs in *Cumnock*, and it was obſerved that ſuch 'contagion was therein that all in that village died, there was not a man left 'to bury the dead.

'He was famous in his generation for the power he had in prevailing with 'God by prayer and ſupplication, whereof take theſe following inſtances a-'mongſt the many which might be given.'

One is, that being on a certain night under an extraordinary preſſure of ſpirit to go and pour forth his heart to God, 'he left his wife in bed, and go-'ing out to a garden ſpent moſt of the night in that exerciſe, (a thing ſo or-'dinary to him that he uſed to ſay, he wondered how a chriſtian could 'lye a bed all night without riſing to ſpend ſome of the night in prayer 'and praiſe,) but his wife weary, at laſt went to ſeek for him, but miſſing 'him in his ordinary place, went into other gardens, by ſuch paſſages as ſhe 'knew, at laſt ſhe heard a voice, and drawing near to it, could hear him ſpeak 'a few words, but with great force and fervency, mixed and accompanied 'with floods of tears, which were theſe,' *O God, wilt thou not give me* Scotland! O *God, wilt thou not give me* Scotland! She being weary and afraid to interrupt him, went home, and heard not the cloſe. At laſt he came home, and re-entring his bed, his wife began to reprove his unmercifulneſs to his own body, and then asked him, what it was he was ſaying; for ſhe told ſhe heard him. Well, ſaid he, you had better have been in your bed, but ſince ye heard, I tell you, I have indured a great fight for *Scotland* this night, and hardly could I get a remnant reſerved, yet he will be gracious.

After this he aroſe another night, but went not out of doors, but in a chamber he travelled and groaned ſo, as his wife impatient did riſe ſeveral times, calling him to bed; but he waited his time, and when he came ſhe began a modeſt expoſtulation with him for tarrying: *Hold thy peace;* ſaid he, *it will be well with us, but I ſhall never preach another preaching in* Air: and having fallen aſleep, before he awaked the meſſenger was come who by command carried him priſoner to the caſtle of *Edinburgh*.

'When he was priſoner in the caſtle of *Edinburgh*, the Lord *Uchiltree* was 'captain, whoſe ſiſter was Mr. *Welſh* his mother-in-law, being *John Knox*'s 'wife: yet being much taken up in king *James* his court, he took not time 'to be ſo comfortable to his couſen *Welſh* as he ſhould: but being convinced 'of his own unkindneſs he cauſed Mr. *Welſh* ſup with him one night in the 'caſtle, where were alſo ſeveral other gentlemen, and amongſt them a popiſh 'youth, ſat toward the lower end of the table, Mr. *Welſh* being by the cap-'tain, ſet at the upper end entertained the company with grave and edifying 'diſcourſe which all delighted to hear, ſave this young papiſt who with laugh-'ter and deriſion laboured to ſilence him, which was little regarded by Mr.

'*Welſh*.

'*Welſh*. But after ſupper while the gueſts ſat a little, this youth ſtood up at 'the lower end of the table, and while Mr. *Wilſh* proceeded from grave to 'gracious entertainment of his company, the youth came to that height of 'inſolence as with the finger to point at him and with the face to make flout-'ing grimaces, whereby he grieved the holy man, ſo as on a ſudden he was 'forced to a ſilence.'

The whole company who had heard him with delight were ſilent with him: within a little Mr. *Welſh* was moved by the ſpirit of God, broke forth into theſe words: *Gentlemen, the ſpirit of God is provoked againſt us, and I ſhall intreat you not to be afraid to ſee what God ſhall do among you before you riſe from the table, for he will ſmite ſome one of you with death before you go hence.* All were ſilently aſtoniſhed, waiting to ſee the iſſue with fear. 'And while every man feared himſelf, except the inſolent youth, he fell 'down dead ſuddenly at the foot of the table to ſhew the power of God's jea-'louſy againſt the mockers of his ſpirit and the offers of his grace. This hi-'ſtory, with variation of ſome circumſtances, is ſet down before Page 425.'

One day while Mr. *Welſh* looked out at his chamber window in the caſtle, he happened to ſee the captain, and called unto him, ſaying, God ſave you my Lord: the captain acknowledging his neglect and asking for Mr. *Welſh* his welfare, deſired to know how he might ſerve him. *In nothing*, ſaid Mr. *Welſh*, *if you be well, except you would carry my petition to his Majeſty intreating for liberty to preach the goſpel.* I willingly will, ſaid the captain, therefore ſend it to me. 'Nay, ſaid Mr. *Welſh*, I am your kinſman, I love you ſo 'well as to warn you not to take it in charge, except you reſolve to deal truly in 'delivering it and in getting me an anſwer. I ſhall bear the blame, ſaid 'the captain, if I do it not, I beſeech you, my Lord, ſaid the other, under-'take not unleſs you mind to do it, for the hazard is great. Well, *Uchiltry* 'takes it, but not coming in an opportune ſeaſon (for he came when the 'king was paſſionately moved on another occaſion) he thought not fit then 'to give it, and as at that time he deferred, ſo thereafter he neglected, and 'at laſt quite forgot to deliver it at all. For which his heart ſmiting 'him he durſt hardly be ſeen of Mr. *Welſh* for three months. Yet con-'ſcience forgetting as well as he, he came to the ſame place where Mr. *Welſh* 'at firſt called him: And now Mr. *Welſh* asked how he did and what was be-'come of his petition? The captain ſurpriſed anſwered, I delivered it to his 'Majeſty, but he was in a paſſion, and it ſeems it hath fallen by, for I have 'not gotten an anſwer. Nay my Lord, ſaid Mr. *Welſh*, you ſhould not lye 'to God and to me, I know you delivered it not, I am ſorry my Lord for 'your lot, I warned you not to be falſe to God, and now I tell you, God 'ſhall take your eſtate and honours in *Scotland*, and ſhall give them to your 'neighbour, and this in your own time. This troubled the Lord *Uchiltry*, 'and came truly to paſs, for he being the eldeſt ſon of the good Lord *Uchiltry* 'a reformer, was forced in his own time to quit all and give both eſtate and ho-'nours to *James*, the ſon of captain *James*, the ſecond brother who was the 'laſt of that houſe.

III. Concerning Mr. *John Scrimger*, miniſter at *Kinghorn*. There was a godly woman under his charge called - - - - - who fell ſick of a very lingring ſickneſs, and was all the while aſſaulted with ſtrong temptations apprehending 'ſhe was a caſt away (yet had ſhe not only given ground for charity, but her 'chriſtian converſation for a long time had put the reality of the grace of God 'in her beyond debate with the more diſcerning who knew her) Mr. *Scrimger* 'often viſited her, while in this deep exerciſe, conferred with her, prayed o-'ver her, but her trouble remained notwithſtanding and the terrors of God

'ſtill

' ſtill lodged with her. When ſhe drew near her diſſolution, ſhe became ' worſe both in body and ſpirit; and ſent for Mr. *Scrimger*, who at that time ' took two of his elders with him, and in their preſence firſt endeavoured to ' comfort her by exhortation and conference, then he prayed, and ſeeing ' her the nearer her end ſeemingly the worſe, he made ſome of the elders ' to pray, and again he himſelf prayed. But Satan ſtill raged the more and ' her ſoul the more removed from peace. Then he ſat in a muſe a little ſpace ' and ſaid, what's this? our laying before her grounds of comfort will not do ' it, conference will not do it, prayer will not do it, we muſt uſe another re- ' medy. Sure I am this is a daughter of *Abraham*, ſure I am, I am the elder, ' ſure I am ſhe hath ſent for me.' *And therefore in name of God, the father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt who ſent him to redeem ſinners, in name of Jeſus Chriſt who obeyed the father, and came to ſave us, in name of the holy and bleſſed Spirit, our quickner and ſanctifier, I the elder command thee a daughter of* Abraham, *to be looſed from theſe bonds.*' And immediately peace and joy ſucceeded.

An example it is of God's power in that time to make our hair ſtand at the force of faith and boldneſs of ſpirit; rather than to be imitated by ſuch as wanting the ancient holineſs would rather have a ſpirit for miracles than for ſalvation.

IV. I ſhall here inſert ſome ſpecial and edifying remarks of the life of that great and worthy ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt Mr. *Robert Blair* (well known to this church it being but a few yearrs ſince his death) who was deſervedly numbered among the firſt of theſe great and worthy inſtruments whom the Lord raiſed up amongſt us for carrying on the late bleſſed reformation. Some of which I knew from himſelf (though from much humble modeſty he too much in theſe things concealed himſelf, and ſhunned the ſetting down thereof under his own hand whereto he was much preſſed) but the moſt of them I had from one of his ſpecial intimate friends and a grave and eminent miniſter of this church.

' In his yonger yeares it was known how much he out-run others in his ' ſtudies, and gave theſe who knew him ground to hope what after was ſeen; ' the Lord was pleaſed to call him by the miniſtry of famous *Trochrig* in ' whoſe hand (theſe were his own words) did the Lord put the key that firſt ' opened his heart, upon his firſt coming forth to preach, he by remarkable ' providence had *maſter Bruce* whom you have formerly mentioned to be his ' hearer; and as I heard himſelf declare it was his deſire to have the judgment ' of ſo great a man upon his diſcourſe, whoſe cenſure he ſaid he would never ' forget, it had been ſo much bleſſed. Which was this, I *found*, ſaith he, *your ' ſermon very poliſhed and digeſted (which was indeed eaſy to one of his ' parts) but there is one thing I did miſs in it, to wit the ſpirit of God ' I found not that.* This grave Mr. *Blair* did often ſpeak to others, ' which then took a deep impreſſion upon himſelf, and helped him to ſee ' it was ſomethig elſe to be a miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt than to be a know- ' ing and eloquent preacher. He was for divers years Regent in the col- ' ledge of *Glaſgow*, where he made it his work to train up theſe under his ' charge in the ſtudy of godlineſs as well as of human learning: but by reaſon ' of the prejudice of ſome who had power in that place he could not long ' ſtay. One paſſage whilſt he was there, I did hear him relate: upon the re- ' port of ſome ſinful oath to be preſſed upon the maſters of the colledge, he ' inquired at a fellow Regent of his, Mr. *Gawin foreſyth* what he would do ' in that matter,' whoſe anſwer was, *by my faith I muſt live*, to whom Mr. *Blair* ſaid, *Sir, I will not ſwear by by faith as you do, but truly I intend to live by my faith, you may chooſe your own way; but I will adventure on*

the Lord. 'That wretched man did continue, to whom the matter of an oath 'was a ſmall thing, after he was gone: but, which is worthy of a remark, 'many years after Mr. *Forſyth* fell in ſuch poverty as forced his ſupplicating of 'the general aſſembly for ſome relief, where whorthy Mr. *Blair* was then 'mad choice of to preſide as moderator, and upon his appearance in that de-'plorable caſe could not ſhun the obſerving of that former paſſage, and up-'on his addreſs to him in private put him in mind thereof, though with great 'tenderneſs, as he ſaid, not in the leaſt to upbraid him in his low condition, 'but to let him ſee he had been truly carried through by his faith at which he 'formerly had ſcoffed.' After his being put from the Colledge, he went to viſit his brother then miniſter at *Dumbarton*, and confeſſed that by the way he could not forbear ſinging from joy in the remembrance of God's being with him, and helping him to be inſtrumental in the good of the youth who had been under his inſpection; he went after to *Ireland* being tryſted with a call from *Bangor*, and upon the ſight of land his heart was ſo immediately made to exult within him for joy, that as he ſaid, he could ſcarce bear the ſame. Whilſt he came near *Bangor* he had a ſtrong impreſſion born in upon him that the Dean of *Bangor* was ſick unto death and ſhould riſe no more, which at firſt he rejected as an unpertinent ſuggeſtion, but going further on his way, it was with ſuch power impreſſed upon his ſpirit, as forced him to take notice of it; when he came to the place, he found the Dean was indeed lying ſick, and though a moſt naughty man, made him not only welcome upon his viſit, but incouraged him to hold on in his way, and told him he was to ſucceed him in that charge, yea he ſpoke ſo unlike himſelf, and in a ſtrain ſo different from what was uſual unto him, that a gentlewoman ſtanding by ſaid to ſome others, an angel is ſpeaking out of the Dean's bed to Mr. *Blair*, thinking it could not be ſuch a man. He had been once troubled with an appearance of the Devil whilſt he was a Regent in the colledge, who like a crooked boy that waited on him ſtood up and laughed him in the face, whilſt he was ſerious in his chamber, and im-'mediately diſappeared: 'But after whilſt he was at *Bangor* there was one in 'that pariſh who went to *Scotland* with horſes to ſell, and at a fair was tryſted 'with a man who at once was willing to buy them all; but pretending he 'had not all that money at preſent gave him bond until *Mertimeſs*; the 'poor man having no ſuſpicion, returns; and near that time, going home-'ward from *Bangor* one night, his merchant meets him, who was the Devil; 'now ſaid he, you know my bargain, how I bought you at ſuch a place, and 'I am come as I promiſed to pay you the price. Bought me, ſaid the other 'trembling, you bought but my horſes, nay ſays the Devil I will let you know 'I bought your ſelf, and to the poor man confounded with fear ſaid, he muſt 'either kill ſome body, and the more excellent the perſon were the better 'it would be for him, elſe he would not free him, and particularly charged 'him to kill Mr. *Blair*. The man overcome with terror, and through the 'violence of that temptation, determined the thing, and went to *Mr. Blair*'s 'houſe with a dagger in his right-hand hid beneath his cloak, and though 'much confounded was moving to get it out: but after Mr. *Blair*'s ſpeaking 'to him the poor man fell a trembling ſo extremely, that upon a further in-'quiry he freely declared for what end he was come, and told he had laboured 'to draw out his dagger, but it would not come from the ſcabbard, though 'he knew not what hindered it; for then when he eſſayed to draw it forth a-'gain it came out with much eaſe. *Maſter Blair* bleſſing the Lord exhorted him to chooſe him for his refuge, he was after threatned and much terrifyed by the Devil but nothing more followed.

After

After ſome time in the miniſtery at *Bangor*, he with others of his worthy brethren was ſilenced by the *Biſhop*, and as he told himſelf, was in the church when the *Biſhop* (one *Eckline*) did himſelf intimate the ſentence. *Upon which Mr.* Blair *aroſe up publickly in the congregation and with great authority did cite the Biſhop to appear before the tribunal of Jeſus Chriſt to anſwer for what he was doing contrary to his own light and conſcience, againſt theſe whom he knew to be faithful miniſters of the goſpel; whereupon the man was ſo aſtoniſhed, that he immediately cryed out,* I appeal from the tribunal of the juſtice of God to the throne of his mercy, to whom Mr. *Blair* replies. *Sir, your appeal is rejected, for you know what you are doing is directly againſt your conſcience, which hath made you bear witneſs to us as the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt.* A few months after the Biſhop fell ſick, and the phyſicians inquiring about his caſe, he only could ſay *my conſcience*, and ſo died. ‘ Whilſt under reſtraint he was by his brethren ſent to ‘ *England*, to deal with the King for their liberty, when he was on the road ‘ he was taken with a mighty fit of the ſtone which made him lie upon his ‘ horſe's neck, not being able to hold up his back, which much diſquieted ‘ him as being a probable let upon ſuch an important buſineſs. And in this ‘ poſture turned to the Lord in prayer, but immediately after eſſaying if he ‘ could poſſibly lift up his back, he found to his aſtoniſhment, his torment- ‘ ing pain quite gone, and perfect eaſe, nor did it recurre to him for two years ‘ after. A few days after in the ſame journey his horſe fell very lame, which ‘ did in ſome meaſure trouble him, having no convenient acceſs to provide ‘ himſelf of an other, and even upon this, did addreſs to the Lord by prayer ‘ that in ſuch a ſtraight he might be helped, which he graciouſly condeſcend- ‘ ed to do, ſo that the horſe was to his amazement healed, and without the ‘ leaſt halt did carry him to *London*. Whilſt he was there he did eſſay what ‘ he could to accompliſh his buſineſs, but could have no acceſs to the King, ‘ yea, ſome who were his friends at court after trial aſſured him he had no ‘ ground to hope in that matter; yet he reſolved to continue and roll the bu- ‘ neſs over on the Lord, for whoſe ſervice he was only importuning an open ‘ door; and one day having gone to *Greenwich*, where the Court then was, ‘ being wearied with on-waiting without acceſs he retired into the park to ‘ pray, where after much wreſtling with the Lord, he was in a more than or- ‘ dinary way brought near, and had ſo clear a return, that he could not with- ‘ ſtand the aſſurance he got that his way ſhould be ſucceſsful, but the appear- ‘ ance thereof in an ordinary way being ſo ſmall, preſſed him to adventure ‘ humbly the asking of a ſign from the Lord, and immediately after there ‘ being a conſiderable wind that blew hard, and made a noiſe among the bul- ‘ ruſhes that grew there, ſo great a calm did preſently follow that not the ‘ leaſt plant of the ground did any ways move or ſtir, he went thence to *Lon- ‘ don*, and within a few days in a moſt ſtrange way had his petition preſented ‘ to the King and accepted; yea, in St. *James's* park was particularly called ‘ for, where the King with his own hand did not only ſign it, but wrote theſe ‘ words in the margin which he directed to the depute *indulge the education ‘ of theſe miniſters for they are Scots men.* When he was in *England*, he ‘ had a ſtrange diſcovery of his wife (an excellent gentlewoman) her dying, ‘ and that ſhe was lying in ſuch a bed, and a chriſtian friend of his particular ‘ acquaintance beſide her, when he came home, he found his wife in health; ‘ but a little after fell ſick and died in that ſame bed with that friend ſitting ‘ by her, and with all theſe particular circumſtances. Theſe are but a few of ‘ many great and remarkable paſſages in that excellent man's life who was ‘ himſelf as great an obſerver of providence as any in the age he lived in, and

‘ this

' this he had notably verifyed in himself which was an usual saying of histo
' others' *observable things do follow them who are given to observation.*

V. This seems an eminent instance of the providence of God, and worthy to be on record, that concerns the Laird of *Raith, of a known and ancient family in this country, who in the beginning of the reformation was a* professed papist ; *but the Lord directing that great servant of his Mr.* Wishart *one night very late to his house, who after some repulse from a servant, got access to this gentleman, and told him he was come with the offer of the gospel of Christ to him and his family, if he would receive it, which was in that manner backed with the authority of God, and his power on that gentleman's conscience, that he most kindly received Mr.* Wishart, *and told him, his offer was welcome ; and a little after this visit was made so successful upon Mr.* Wishart's *instructing him and his family in the truth, that they publickly professed the same, and this worthy gentleman evidenced his being truly taken by the heart ; but sometime after, upon a snare laid for him by cardinal* Beaton, *he was seased upon in the Laird of* Grange's *house, and thence carried prisoner to the castle of* Edenburgh, *and so hotly pursued by this wretched man's rage, who then was in his greatest power, that in a short time he was sentenced to die; his Lady being overwhelmed with grief, upon her husband's suffering and the forfeiture of that estate, having five sons, besides some daughters, to provide, did move him ; but as one then much with God he with much confidence told her having gotten this assurance from that God for whom he suffered, concerning his house and posterity that she had no cause to be troubled: for as to her outward case she should yet live to see the youngest of her sons in a better condition than he had been himself, which most clearly fell out, and is well known to many in this time : his second son went to* France, *was there raised to great honour, and upon his returning home, purchased a considerable estate, and was made Lord* Melvin, *and which calls for a remark, bought a part of the cardinal's estate, the then great instrument of the present ruin of his house, which continues to this day. His third son was Lord* Tongland *as one of the judges of the Session, and an other of them Laird of* Halhill, *but, which was most strange, that the* French *King, (it seems moved from the great respect he had, to that worthy gentleman,* Sir *Robert Melvin, the second son formerly mentioned) did, upon some treaty with* Scotland, *press and procure the taking off the forfeiture of that estate of* Raith, *whereby the eldest son was also restored, and it is known to this day, in what a measure the Lord hath graciously witnessed his respect to that house and family which now is enjoyed by my Lord* Melvin, *who as he is by a continued succession the descent of that worthy gentleman, who thus suffered for the truth, so it is hoped he shall be found walking in the steps of his truly renowned ancestors, who walked with God and adhered to his truth while forsaken and persecuted.*

VI. I shall mention amongst these late instances a notable passage of an excellent man, and deservedly of great repute in his time amongst the first restorers of the gospel, and of learning in *France,* after the reformation, which grave and famous *Rivet* sets down in a letter of his to his brother, and is since his death printed in the *french* tongue ; which relation I shall give to these who have not access to that book. It is this. *James Faber,* ' native ' of a steeple in *Piccardy,* a most faithful and eminent minister of the gos- ' pel there, did in the persecution of that time, flee with others, and for ' security retired to the Queen of *Navarre,* then in *Albret* in *Gascoine,* ' who had him in high esteem : on a certain day the Queen did advertise him,

' she

'ſhe purpoſed to come and dine at his houſe, and for that end did invite 'ſome learned men, in whoſe conference ſhe took much delight: at dinner '*Faber* became exceedingly ſad, and now and then fell out in bitter weep- 'ing, at which the Queen complained, and inquiring the cauſe, why he 'weeped whilſt ſhe had come to be merry with him, he in the end ſaid, moſt 'ſerene Queen, how can I be glad, or make others glad, who am as wicked 'a man as the earth bears. And what is that wickedneſs, ſays ſhe, you have 'committed, who are known from your youth to have lived ſo holily? He 'anſwered I am now the age of an hundred years, free from the touch of 'of any woman, and remembers not that I have committed what would 'burthen my conſcience, or make me afraid to leave the world, except one 'ſin, for which I am aſſured propitiation is poſſible, and as ſhe preſſed him to 'tell it, whilſt he could ſcarce ſpeak for abundance of tears, He ſaid, how 'can I ſtand before the throne of God, who having taught others in purity 'and ſincerity, the holy Evangel of the ſon of God, many of whom 'having followed my doctrine, have conſtantly ſuffered a thouſand torments 'and death it ſelf, in the mean time I an unconſtant Doctor did flee; and 'though I had lived long enough, and ſhould not have feared death, but 'rather deſired it, yet did withdraw, and thus cowardly tranſgreſſed the com- 'mand of my God. Whereupon the Queen, as ſhe was moſt eloquent, 'did by reaſon and example ſhew him this had befallen others of the holy 'ſervants of God, and others there alſo, did add ſuch conſiderations as he 'became more chearful, and ſaid there remains nothing, but that I go from 'hence to God, and after I have now made my teſtament, I have that im- 'preſſion, I muſt delay no longer, knowing the Lord calls for me. After 'he fixed his eyes on the Queen, and ſays, Madam, I make you my heir 'and to your preacher *Gerard* I leave my Books; and my cloaths and other 'things I have I leave to the poor; whereupon the Queen ſmiling, asked, 'what then Mr. *Faber* ſhall I have? The care, ſaid he, Madam, to diſtribute 'this to the poor; it is well, ſaid ſhe I ſolemnly profeſs, this legacy is more 'acceptable to me, than if the King my brother, had named me his heir: 'thereafter they ſaw him more joyful, then he ſaid, I have need of ſome 'reſt, be you merry and joyful, and in the mean time adieu: and having 'ſpoke this, he turned him over on a bed that was near: where as they judged 'he lay ſleeping, but was indeed fallen aſleep in the Lord, without the leaſt 'ſign of a previous indiſpoſition, and when they were about to awake him, 'found him to their admiration dead; ſuch was the end of this perſonage un- 'undoubtably holy, which the Queen of *Navarre* did her ſelf relate to the 'Elector *Frederick* the ſecond of *Palatine*, when he was ſick at *Paris*, in his 'return from *Spain*, from the Emperor *Charles* V. and it was commu- 'nicated by a worthy gentleman *Hubertus Thomas*, a counſellor of the ſaid '*Fredericks*, who was preſent at this relation of the Queens, from whom '*Rivet* had it written by himſelf'.

VII. I ſhall ſubjoin two paſſages worthy of obſervation, which concern a grave and eminently good miniſter in the church of *Ireland*, Mr. *Andrew Steward*, miniſter at *Dunagor*, which together with ſome of theſe other remarkable inſtances here mention'd) were tranſmitted unto me from his worthy ſon Mr. *Andrew Steward*, miniſter of *Donachadee*, who both knew the certainty of them, and was himſelf alſo a great obſerver of ſuch confir- mations of the truth; whom I cannot mention without ſorrow at the remem- brance of the late removal of ſo eminent and uſeful a miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt.

The firſt is an inſtance and evidence of the power and prevalency of *prayer* with God, on a *Monday* after a communion where a great multitude being ga-

thered and these of the choicest of that country, whilst as a shepherd he was feeding his flock in a large place (for the numerousness of the hearers imposed a necessity upon him to preach in the field) an horrid black cloud and fearful to look on hang'd directly over their head, which to all present threatned a strange pouring-down of rain, whereby the exercise would have been interrupted; yea, some drops were begun to fall, but Mr. *Stewart* then at great advantage in his own spirit as to nearness with God begg'd their leave to retire a little from the place, and went to an other part for prayer, and while he prayed it was observably seen, that the cloud did remove half a mile off on the south hand, and there fell down in such a mighty rain, that albeit it was the heat of summer the brooks so swelled that some coming too late to sermon could not have passage over, but where they were gathered there was not one drop more, so that he went on with a full gail to the close of the work, to the no small advantage and conviction of his hearers.

The next concerns his death, being called to the burial of that excellent man of God Mr. *Josiah Welsh*, son of that great man formerly mentioned who was his neighbour minister, he stood sometime at the grave as a sad observer of such a thing, and to some who were by said, *Who knows whowill be next?* But none answering, he said to them, I know, and thus turned away, and went home to *Dunagor* on his foot, and entering into the church did bolt the doors, where he tarry'd some two hours, and after going to his house he fell a sleep on his bed with an excess of grief, whence he never in health rose again, but was buried that day month. When his wife returned whom he had left with Mr. *Welsh*'s widow, she inquired what he had been doing, to whom he said I have been taking my leave of the church of *Dunagor*, and I was there taking timber and stones to witness that in my short time I had laboured to be faithful, and that according to my light, I have revealed the whole counsel of God to the people, (how great a testimony of the conscience was this) after a forteen nights lying, Mr. *Ridge* a choice *English* minister there came to visit him, and said, I hope, Sir, you do not now rew that ye have been faithful, he answered, I rew nothing but that I was too long in beginning (he mean'd his resisting, for several years a call to the ministery, to which he had been much pressed) and I will tell you a strange thing which hath helped me to be faithful, these last seven years there hath not one day passed me, without thoughts of death, and renewed submission to it, yea, this made me neglect my body which should have served the Lord, as if it had been mire in the street, which now troubleth me. That night when he died several godly and grave christians were with him, where for a long time he fell in a deep silence, which ended with heavy groanings often reiterated, at last a christian there desired to know what troubled him, but he refused to tell, at last being urged he said. I shall tell you my hair stands to behold, what I see coming on these Lands (this was in the year 1634.) and being further pressed he said, *the bloody* wars of *Germany* shall never be ballanced with the wars of these three Kingdoms; what do you speak, Sir, said one of the company, to whom he answered, *The dead bodies of many thousands who this day despise the glorious gospel shall lie upon the earth as dung unburied*, and whilst asked what then shall become of us and of our posterity? He lifted up his voice, and said, *He that is for the sword to the sword, he that is for captivity to captivity, and he that is for famine to famine, and God shall be avenged on these lands*, and whilst one said, is there no remedy? He cried thrice, *No remedy, no remedy, no remedy*; then he held his peace a little and said, I tell you what must be, *the broken covenant of* Scotland *must be renewed, the formality of* Ireland *must be purged, the prodigality of* England *removed,*

removed, and the ſons of Saul *muſt be hung up before the ſun.* By which laſt word none knew what he mean'd. Some of his own pariſh being preſent asked what he would ſay to them, to whom he replied, *Wo to thee* Dunagor *for the nettles, and the long graſs ſhall be in greater plenty in thee than ever were people to hear the word of God*, this the forementioned relater ſaid, he was a witneſs to three years together after the late rebellion, they asked if he would have his children, he ſaid no, he had done with them, and whilſt they mentioned one of his daughters he deſired to be foreborn, and ſaid, ſhe ſhould ſee glorious days after all this, and then takes his wife by the hand, (who having but a fourth night lien in of child, crept out of the bed to get and give a long farewel) to whom he ſaid, Thou haſt in faithfulneſs ſuffered many things with me in my pilgrimage, and now wherewith ſhall I comfort thee my love (think that he left her with four children, much debt contracted whilſt he reſiſted a call to the miniſtery, and but thirty ſhilling ſterling then to do all with) *a father to the fatherleſs, a judge to the widow is God in his holy habitation*, as God is God, thou ſhalt never want nor none of thine, but in all the ſad days that are coming you ſhall be a wonder of mercy in every place, whither you are carried, and not a hair of your head ſhall fall, which was, to the conviction and edification of many, fully accompliſhed, which the forementioned relator does himſelf alſo atteſt, though with much humble modeſty, becauſe of his near relation.

VIII. This paſſage alſo I muſt inſtance of a remarkable providence to a grave, and to this day famous chriſtian in our country *John Stewart*, provoſt of *Air*, who from his very young years did witneſs a reſpect to godlineſs, he had a conſiderable eſtate left him by his father, but having ſo great a weight and impreſſion on his ſpirit of the diſtreſs and ſtraitned condition of many good people whom he knew in the country, and love to Jeſus Chriſt and his truth, having got the command over him, and all his intereſt, he did deliberately call them, as he had acceſs, together in *Edenburgh*, and having ſpent ſome time in prayer, took their ſolemn promiſe, not to reveal while he lived what he was to do; he ſaid, he knew in what ſtraits many of them were, to hold up the credit of the profeſſion, and therefore he had brought a little money to lend each of them; yet ſo as they ſhould never offer to repay it till he required the ſame, this was not known until his death, that ſome of theſe found themſelves oblig'd to make it known. Sometime after he had beſtowed this money, the plague having been ſore in *Aire*, and trade much decayed, he himſelf fell under ſome ſtraits, and ſome of the prophane in that place begun to make it their upcaſt, that religion had made him poor, and his giving much to others like a fool, made him now want himſelf; ' the profeſſion and the credit of it was ' always this godly man's darling, which made him quite the country at that ' time, and borrowing a little money went over to *France*, that he might the ' better conceal his ſtrait; when he came to *Rochel*, the ſalt and other ' commodities were become exceeding cheap, becauſe there had been no tra- ' ding of a long time, on which he adventured to fraught a ſhip, and loaden ' her upon credit; he himſelf came over the neareſt to *England*, and thence ' to *Aire*, with expectation of the ſhips return, but after long on-waiting, he ' was informed for certain, that his ſhip was taken with the *Turks*, which be- ' came matter of great exerciſe to him, not becauſe he knew not how to be ' abaſed, as well as how to abound; but, fearing leſt the mouths of wicked ' men, might ſo much the more on this occaſion be opened to reproach the ' profeſſion, that for many days he kept his chamber; at laſt a maid who had ' heard amongſt the people that *John Stewart's* ſhip was arrived in the rode ' came running and cried at the door that his ſhip was come; but he being at

' prayer,

' prayer, could not be moved from his maſter's company, till he was ſatisfyed,
' and then went forth and ſaw it was a truth, but as a further ground of pre-
' ſent exerciſe to him a worthy chriſtian and great intimate of his *John Ken-*
' *nedy*, who for joy had gone forth in a ſmall boat to the ſhip, by the ſud-
' den falling down of a ſtorm was carried by the ſhip, and in the judgment
' of all that looked on, he and the boat were ſwallowed up, yea, the ſtorm in-
' creaſed at that rate, that they feared the loſs of the ſhip alſo; which did ſo
' deeply affect this gracious man, that for three days he could be ſeen by
' none, under the weight of ſuch a trial; but at laſt, having gone forth to
' viſit the widow (as then ſuppoſed) whilſt with that family they were mu-
' tually witneſſing grief, *John Kennedy* immediately comes in, who had not
' been caſt away, but by a ſtrange providence the boat had been driven a far
' way to another place of the coaſt: here at once many mercies did meet,
' he vended the commodities of the ſhip, which having paid all his debt,
' returned him twenty thouſand marks more to himſelf: thus was that bread
' caſt upon the waters, and to appearance loſt, after many days returned, and
' that witneſſed *that by liberal devices the liberal man doth ſtand.* I muſt
' add a word upon the death of this worthy man, whilſt then his friends came
' to ſee him, he oft uſed this word, *be humble*, and anent his own caſe, he
' ſaid, I go the way of all fleſh, and it may be ſome of you doubt nothing
' of my well being; yea, I teſtify that except when I ſlept or was on buſineſs,
' I was not theſe ten years without thoughts of God, ſo long as I could be
' in going from my houſe to the croſs, and yet I doubt my ſelf, and am in
' great agony, yea, at the brink of deſpair; but a day or two before he died
' he turned his face to the wall, from company, who asked what he was doing,
' upon which he turned himſelf with theſe words, I have been fighting and
' working out my ſalvation, with fear and trembling, and now I bleſs God
' it is perfected, ſealed, confirmed, and all fears are gone'.

It is a memorable inſtance known yet to many in the north of *Ireland*, of a choice and godly gentlewoman when the rebellion brake up there, who fled with ſome other perſons with her and three children one of them upon the breaſt, *they had not gone far, till they were ſtriped naked by the* Iriſh, *who to admiration ſpared their lives* (*it is like thinking the cold and hunger would kill them*) *afterwards going on, at the foot of a river which runs in to* Locheach, *others met them, and will have them caſt in to the river; but this godly woman not diſmayed, asked a little liberty to pray, and as ſhe lay naked on the frozen ground, got reſolution not to go on her own feet to ſuch an unjuſt death, upon which having called her and ſhe refuſing, was dragged by the heels along that rugged way to be caſt in, with the reſt of her company; but ſhe then turned and on her knees ſays, you ſhould, I am ſure, be chriſtians, and men I ſee you are; in taking away our miſerable lives you do us a pleaſure; but know, that as we never wronged you nor yours, you muſt remember to die alſo your ſelves, and one day give an account of this cruelty to the judge of heaven and earth, on which an iriſh prieſt then preſent* ſaid; let us not take their lives, but we will put them into this iſland of the lake, a boat being at the river all the eight naked and without meat are turned into that iſland, where after four days ſtaying, ſome of the company died for hunger and cold, but not this woman or any of her children; for ſhe lived by faith, upon the word of God and not by bread only: a day
' after, the two boys having crept aſide, found the hide of a beaſt, which had
' been killed, at the root of a tree, which the mother and they endeavoured
' to get caſt over them then lying upon the ſnow: the next day a little boat
' goes by, unto whom ſhe calls for God's ſake to take her out; but they being

' Iriſh

'Iriſh would not, ſhe deſired a little bread, they ſaid they had none, then 'ſhe begs a coal of fire, which ſhe obtained, for ſhe had ſeen ſmoak in the 'boat, and thus with ſome fallen chips made a little fire, and the boys tak-'ing a piece of the hide laid it on the coals, and began to gnaw the leather, 'but without an extraordinary divine ſupport what could this do? Thus they 'lived ten days without any viſible mean of help, and that good woman pro-'feſſed it was by faith and joy in God, that ſhe did live; nor had ſhe any bread 'but ice and ſnow, nor drink except water; but ſhe thought God put more 'ſubſtance into it, and found it as it were clammy, the next day a boat car-'ried her out, to the ſide of the band-water, where ſhe had yet been loſt, 'but that ſhe could not ſuffer to ſee her children die in her ſight, and though 'the two boys were young and ſo ſtarved that they had no ſtrength, ſhe preſſed 'them to go out of her ſight, under pretence of ſeeking ſome fire, and bids 'them hold their face to ſuch an airth, where in that deſolate country ſhe 'knew they could have no fire, yet in ſuch an extreme left room for God to 'work their ſafety: the poor children were not able, and had not gone far 'till they ſaw two or three great dogs eating a man, who had been killed, the 'children were afraid at the ſight of the dogs (who needed not fear any thing 'but to live in ſuch a condition) and one of them came running and leaped 'upon one of the children without doing him the leaſt hurt, but fawned on 'them, and would run a little before, and then tarry till the children came 'up, and ſo led them on to a houſe where ſmoak appeared, which was an 'iriſh man's, protected by the Engliſh in *Antrum*, by whoſe means they 'were marvelouſly preſerved, and the mother ſent for and ſuccoured by a par-'ty of *Antrum*. I would ſhut this paſſage up with ſomething truly obſerva-'ble anent this gentlewoman's husband, who was a ſweet humoured gentle-'man, and godly, and one who uſed to frequent that famous *Fridays* meet-'ing at *Antrum* before that rebellion brake up, but being inſnared by ſome '*Arminians* then in the bounds, the worthy miniſters in that place, after ſome 'pains taken on him, could not prevail, Mr. *Blair* being there, had this word 'to a friend, who told it to a godly miniſter in that place from whom I had 'this paſſage, *I am of opinion that this gentleman, ſhall either turn penitent 'or mad before many days*. Which fell out, for he fell ſo furiouſly mad that 'they were driven to the neceſſity of binding him, and thus for a year con-'tinued, though with ſome more ſober intervals, and then would bewail his 'caſe at the end of the year, being very furious, he was taught of the devil, 'but by an over-reaching providence of God, to feign himſelf ſober, and in-'treat his wife to be rid of the manacles, which was done; but at the break 'of day riſing took the coverlet of the bed about him, and went with reſolu-'tion to drown himſelf in the river; but when he was at the brink thereof, 'had this ſuggeſted to him, he was a fool to drown the covering, for it might 'be uſeful, which made him go a little back, and lay it down at the root of 'a tree, and then with full reſolution went to throw himſelf in; but this 'was ſuggeſted to him again at the very brink, were it not beſt to pray, before 'I die: On which he turned a little and falls down to prayer; but ere he 'had done, his wit and judgment was returned, with peace of conſcience and 'aſſurance of pardon, in as large meaſure as ever he enjoyed theſe in his life, 'and thus returned in a ſober frame to the aſtoniſhment of his wife.

IX. There is a ſtrange paſſage of judgment that amongſt the memorable things of the providence of God I think worthy of inſerting, it concerns a Nobleman in our own country, whoſe name with reſpect to his houſe, I for-bear to mention, who for many years by blood, cruelty and oppreſſion, made himſelf a terror in that place of the country where he lived. *One day his*

second son, who after succeeded to that house, by the death of his brother, found a letter sealed and directed to his father, bearing the stile of his house, and without any suspicion whence it came carried it up to his chamber, which that Lord breaking up, found of a strange stile, for it had these words, 'I summond you------ to appear before the tribunal of God, and 'there answer for your murthers, oppressions, &c. *Subscribitur* Diabolus; 'upon which he being inraged, drew his sword to have run his son thorough, 'supposing it a contrived business by him, but he escaped and was forced for 'many months to withdraw from the house; but upon the intercession of 'friends his father did condescend to admit him again, but that very day whilst 'they were met on this account, that nobleman washing his hands in his bed-'chamber, and one of his servants by, a letter from the roof of that cham-'ber drops down upon his hands, sealed and directed as before, *which being 'opened, had the very* same words of the former letter with that dreadful 'subscription *Diabolus: After which by immediate stroke of the Lord's hand, he was struck with a remarkable infatuation, and such an horror and fear upon his conscience, that upon the appearance of the least boy, he would have fled, and with houling sought to have sheltered himself under a bed, and in this case shortly died, having been made a terror to himself, and the meanest person in case to quash him, who made it his work to be terrible to others in his life, this (far from reflecting upon the house or family) with respect to the holding forth the holy and righteous judgment of the Lord, I could not omit to insert the same, after some safe warrant as to the certainty thereof from these I had ground to believe.*

SEVENTH witness to this truth, that the Lord hath in so solemn and extraordinary a way appeared for his church in these last times, is this, *These great and marvelous providences* (*which we may call* Magnalia Dei) *by which he hath witnessed his truth, and confirmed the same since the breaking up of the gospel in this late raising of the church from Antichrist*; For we may truly say there hath not wanted a visible attestation from heaven, and a convincing testimony, by some great works of the Lord, to his truth, as well as in the primitive times of the church.

We do here understand by such providences, these wherein man cannot but see something above nature and natural causes, yea, above the ordinary way of the Lord's working, which doth evidently witness his great and immediate hand, some whereof have been so wonderful, which can be instanced in these late times, as might truly be called miracles; it is true this is not the Lord's usual way, neither maketh he use of such a solemn testimony, but on special and weighty grounds, when the necessity of the church calleth for it, whilst he is about some extraordinary piece of work, or when the gospel cometh first to a land that hath been long over-spread with darkness, when ordinary means of conviction are wanting, or in times of great opposition, when the commission of his servants needeth some extraordinary seal; in such a time as that of *Ahab*, when the people are made to halt betwixt truth and a false way, and thus we find the Lord did confirm the first breaking up of the gospel, and make use of such a mean to spread the christian church through the world, and should this seem strange, that in so great a change of the church's case now in the latter days, when he was to raise her up, after so long a ruin and desolation, whilst Antichristianism so many ages had over-spread the face of the world, that he should thus appear, and give some signal demonstration of his power in behalf of his people, such as we have seen with our eyes, and our fathers did tell us.

It

It is not miracles, or any extraordinary providence on which men ſhould reſolve their faith, nor do we here mention theſe, for laying ſtreſs thereon in believing the truth, no, the proteſtant doctrine, and cauſe doth lean on a ſtronger ground, it can with confidence appeal the adverſary to the ſcripture, theſe divine records which they do not pretend to deny, this, even this is the reaſon of our hope, which we offer to all that ask for the ſame; and there let the God of truth who hath revealed his will, and anſwers men by the written word be judge, and we ſhall demand no greater advantage, nor juſtice at the hand of our enemies; we know miracles cannot authorize a lye, or be a ſeal to any thing repugnant to the ſcripture, and truly theſe lying wonders which have been ſo frequent in the world, which the apoſtle doth foretel that ſuch an engine the devil will make uſe of, to turn men aſide from the truth, beſides other marks of their falſehood, they have this one moſt diſcernible, that they are the ſupport and warrant of that which cannot ſtand alone by the word; and thence are the popiſh miracles made uſe of to confirm ſuch tenets which of all their doctrine do moſt directly contradict the ſcripture, as the merit of works, purgatory, praying for the dead, *&c.* But as we will not boaſt of ſuch, as the authority, or proof of our doctrine, ſo we judge it a grave, and a concering duty to obſerve the wondrous works of the Lord in our times, yea, to make a diligent ſearch there-anent, that we may tell poſterity ſome of theſe great acts of our God, for his church, in bringing her again from *Babel.*

I would deſire to be very tender, and cautious upon ſuch a ſubject, for I judge it horrid divinity to make a lye for God; it is not the truth, but a falſe way which requireth ſuch an help, and truly anent theſe following inſtances, which are but a few of many that might be brought if there were more ſerious enquiry, I dare atteſt the Lord, the great witneſs, that I have not knowingly ſet down here any thing falſe, yea, not without ſome diligent ſearch, and ſatisfying grounds anent the certainty thereof. I judge it not neceſſary to repeat theſe which are ſo known already to the world from publick records, and therefore ſhall but briefly point at ſome of theſe, and add a few more particular inſtances of this kind, which I may with ſome confidence bring to the light, from clear evidences of the truth thereof.

'I ſhall firſt mention that ſolemn teſtimony of Mr. *Baynam* in Queen '*Mary*'s time, who in the midſt of the fire, whilſt his body was all in a flame, 'his arms and legs half burnt, cryed out to by-ſtanders, *O papiſts, ye look af-* '*ter miracles, lo here is one. I am now burning in this fire, but feel no* '*more pain than if I were in a bed of roſes.* O muſt not this be called a mi-'racle, and an extraordinary ſeal from the Lord, to his truth, wherein the 'world would conſider, this was the teſtimony of one, who was upon the 'borders of eternity, which he did declare before a great multitude, atteſted 'by Mr. *Fox* that holy ſervant of Chriſt, who in things of that kind ſo extraor-'dinary was moſt cautious, and did much ſearch out the truth, and certainty 'of what he ſets down, and by him was publiſhed whilſt many of that time, 'who might have been preſent were alive, yea, it is the more remarkable, the 'ſharp combat that this martyr had through the terror of fire a little before his 'death, fearing he ſhould never be able to endure the ſame.

What a remarkable providence was that at a town in the low countries, whilſt 'ſome of the ſaints were put to death, by the *popiſh party*, and among theſe 'one *Michael Bomboutius* a deacon of the reformed church, whilſt they were 'going to ſuffer about mid-day the heavens being moſt clear, there came ſud-'denly ſo great a darkneſs, and ſo horrible, and unuſual a tempeſt which was 'only in that place and above that city diſcerned, that men were generally

'ſhaken

'shaken with fear, thinking there should be a present dissolution of the world; this famous *Voetius* in that piece *de signis*, doth witness that from divers there present even some of them popish he had this related to himself, and as he saith, such a thing papists would have with greatest observation published, as the very finger of God, if they had the same occasion.

'At a town *Alsa* in *Westflanders* whilst a godly man whom the Inquisition there had pursued, was leading to the stake, and was by the way singing 'Psalms, the captain of these who guarded him was so enraged, that he caused presently his tongue to be plucked out by the roots, but lo a few months 'after, this wretched man hath a child born with his tongue hanging out a 'great way, which by no means could be kept within his mouth, this doctor '*Hall* being himself afterwards in that town had shewed him from some who 'were most considerable there, as he sets down in his epistles.

'*Charles* IX. of *France* who was author of that horrid massacre where the 'blood of many thousands of protestants at *Paris*, and other parts was shed, did 'a very little after dye in the strength of his years, by an extraordinary effu-'sion of blood from all passages of his body, that as *Du Serres*, and other *French* 'writers of that time do shew, he was made to wallow in his own blood be-'fore his death. O was not this the very finger of God, a most convincing 'stupendious piece of his judgment.'

What an extraordinary providence was that which is attested by divers witnesses thereto, in the late bloody massacre of *Ireland*; 'A young woman who 'by the *Irish* was stript almost naked, and after by one of them threatned that 'except she would give him her money, he would forthwith run her through, 'to which she gravely answered;' *I know you cannot kill me except God give you leave, whereupon he did three times with his sword run at her naked body but could not once pierce he skin,* which did so confound this wretched man, that with a kind of horror he went away and ceased to trouble her further.

Did not God wonderfully appear in the raising of the late *King of Sweden*, with that astonishing success, which did attend him in breaking the power of the house of *Austria*, whilst they were at so great an height, and had their hands hot recking in the blood of the *Protestants* through *Bohemia*, and other places of *Germany*, O but the Lord's hand might be clearly seen in acting forth, and fitting that party of the *Swedes*, for such a piece of his service, even in a more than ordinary way, who like that he-goat mentioned in *Daniel* did come so swiftly that they touched not the ground, as it were; but like a mighty speat bore down all before them.

The breaking of that great *Spanish Armado* in the year 88 which had been 3 years in contriving, did convincigly witness a divine hand opposing the same, and how remarkable was that issue of all the counsels, expence, and cruelty, which *Philip* II. had made use of to bear down the rising of the gospel in the *Netherlands*; for it is notour that after many essays, the loss of an 100 millions of gold, with near 400000 lives, the reckoning of all his gain, and purchase was only the loss of a considerable part of these countries, and helping forward the establishment of the united provinces; and truly we must say the Lord did by his great, and outstretched hand wonderfully appear in raising that common wealth, so that they may date their flourishing in outward interest, from their owning of the interest of God. Religion did raise them and no people this day hath more cause and are under greater engagements to be zealous for the truth, and defence of the protestant cause.

The breaking of that formidable league of the *Catholicks* in *France* for rooting out the *Protestant Religion* there, was very wonderful, how all their *counsels*, and *designs* should resolve in their own ruin, so that the most ordi-

nary

nary onlookers, could not but see a divine hand counteracting the same: *Davila* though an adversary, in setting down that history, giveth a large account of this.

What a great appearance of the Lord's hand, yea, of an extraordinary providence, was there in the throwing down of the *popish images* and *altars*, almost in one night throw much of the *Netherlands*, which for so many hundred years had been made use of for idolatry. O did not Satan thus fall as lightning from heaven, it being very evident how strange an impulse did carry out the people in this, over all difficulties, or fear of hazard, what a wonderful consent and agreement amongst places so remote about one thing, and almost at one time; how quickly also was it executed through these provinces almost in an instant, the authors did never appear, nor any noise of their boasting there-anent; and which was strange the magistrates of the cities, having both power and will to hinder, yet were so over-ruled and struck with astonishment, that they could not resist; 'and as *Famianus Strada* a great enemy 'to the truth doth shew what fell out in *Antwerp*, and other places, consi-'dering the greatness of the work, the multitude, and height of these ido-'latrous monuments it might have been enough for many days, what was 'done in one night, and not any in the least prejudged or hurt thereby, which 'made him cry out, that sure this was the work of the Devil, and his help 'eminently therein: but I do not wonder, to hear these in such a manner 'blaspheme, whilst they are tormented with so clear a discovery of God's 'hand against them.

'Must we not here mention that great deliverance of the town of *Leyden* 'from the *Spaniard*, with a special remark, whilst it was then manifest, if 'the enemy had made use of cannon in battering the walls, they could not 'have come short of their design: in what an extraordinary way also were 'the winds trysted to raise the waters in order to the town's relief, when they 'were at the utmost extremity, yea for driving the waters back again, when 'the town was once delivered, and which was very marvelous, that the same 'night, wherein the *Spaniards* were forced to retire, a part of the walls fell 'down, which if it had fallen out a little before, that city had been utterly 'lost.' O was not this a divine hand, which even the greatest atheists, and such who judge things to fall out by chance, must confess?

What wonderful providences did attend the actings of that poor handful of protestants in the valleys of *Piemont*, for their necessary self-defence; *Fox* with other writers give a clear account in setting down that horrid persecution which they endured in the year 1555. I shall here only touch some passages mentioned by Mr. *Morland* in his history, who upon the account of that bloody massacre, which was there within these few years, was then near that place, and from sure knowledge, and information doth very gravely hold forth the same; and truly they are providences so marvelous, and astonishing, that men cannot but see the Lord in an extraordinary way helping that poor people, his acting forth a few to do such exploits, beyond any thing that can be mentioned of these great Heroes, whom the world in former years did admire; so that we must say, as this was a convincing proof of the great power of God, put forth for his people, when help in an ordinary way failed, it was also a solemn testimony to their cause, and of the Lord's approbation of his peoples standing for their own defence against the cruelty, and violence of a persecuting magistrate. We have there held forth, 'how after that bloody 'persecution by an order from the *Duke of Savoy*, a small number was in a 'remarkable way raised up, and upon their first essay seven or eight under the 'conduct of that worthy gentleman *Josua Gianavel*, (whom God made use

'of as a choice inſtrument, to help that poor ſcattered remnant) was made 'to fight 300 ſouldiers who were ſent to exerciſe further cruelty in that place, 'killing many of them and purſuing the reſt for a conſiderable time. After, 'a party of 500 being ſent by the marquiſe of *Pianeza* who then command-'ed the *Duke of Savoy*'s forces, were oppoſed by 11 of the proteſtants, and 'other ſix with ſlings, and after a ſhort conflict were forced to flee with conſi-'derable ſlaughter, the terror of the Lord upon the one, and a ſpirit of courage 'and reſolution in the other very manifeſt. After theſe, there was another 'party ſent forth 700 ſouldiers to ſeaſe on all the paſſages, upon which about '17 maſters of families, whoſe hearts God had in a ſignal manner ſtrengthned to 'the battel, for their poor brethrens preſervation, reſolved to caſt themſelves 'upon the Lord for the ſucceſs of their undertakings, and with ſuch marvelous 'boldneſs faced their adverſaries as put them in amazement and made them 'draw off, reſolving to take another way, but were ſtill purſued by this little 'handful, who killed many without the loſs of one man. At another time 'the proteſtants there joyning in a greater number, being 300 under the con-'duct of the forementioned captain *Gianavel* were aſſaulted by 2500 of the 'adverſaries, but the Lord ſo ordered that this little party getting the advantage 'of the place, after ſome conflict did force them to retire, purſuing them in-'to the woods, and ſteep rocks with great ſlaughter, and thus with a marve-'lous courage in a continued fight for eight hours together, did drive the ene-'my before them.' Divers other remarkable paſſages of this kind, are at more length mentioned in that hiſtory which the author after moſt exact ſearch, and enquiry there-anent, doth ſolemny atteſt, and truly it might be much cauſe for wonder as it is there obſerved, that through the Lord's emi-nent appearance, and his bleſſing on his poor peoples endeavours, for the in-tereſt of religion, and their own preſervation they did in a ſhort time diſpute the matter with ſuch a proſperous ſucceſs, againſt all the forces, which the Duke of *Savoy* ſent, that their enemies at laſt began to fear what effect it might pro-duce, and therefore having no better game to play, were glad by a treaty of peace, to get the ſword out of their hands, however they pretended it as a complement, put on neighbouring princes, who did interceed for the ſame.

Have we not alſo to reckon among the great works of the Lord in theſe laſt times, '*Henry* VIII. of *England* moſt violent in oppoſition to the truth, who 'by the *Pope* was ſtiled defender of the faith upon that account, and for his 'writing againſt *Luther*, and yet the ſame man ſhall be the inſtrument made 'uſe of by the Lord, to throw down the *Pope*, and his power in his dominions, 'and give ſome beginning to a great reformation of the church there.

'*Vergerius*, the *Pope's Nuncio*, for many years in *Germany*, whilſt he is 'writing againſt the truth, is even then converted, and forced to yield to the 'power of the ſame, turns proteſtant, and a zealous preacher of the goſpel to 'his death.

'*Galeacæus Carracceolus*, an *Italian Marquiſe* of great place, and eſtate in 'the world, was ſo taken by the heart with one word, in hearing *Peter* '*Martyr*, as made him quite not only all his hopes of preferment, a moſt 'pleaſant place as was in the earth, and a great inheritance, but to go over 'the belly of the moſt preſſing intreaties, and inſinuations of his friends, the 'weeping cries of his Lady, and children, and go to a ſtrange place quiting 'all, that he might preſerve his conſcience, and enjoy fellowſhip with the 'Church. O what a ſolemn witneſs was this to the truth, and of the con-'quering power of Chriſt!'

And in a word what a marvelous thing was it that poor *Luther*, againſt whom ſo much of the world was aloft, with greateſt rage and violence, ſhould

yet

yet live to an old age, and go to the grave in peace. And truly the ſpirit and appearance of this great and firſt witneſs to the truth might be a convincing evidence, that the Lord was then to raiſe up a people to himſelf in whom he would be glorified, by an active teſtimony, as well as by ſuffering. Beſides theſe inſtances, I would here mention ſome remarkable providences worthy indeed to be obſerved, though they are little known to the world, which we may ſay do not only witneſs the power of God, but are a convincing ſeal to his truth, and the church's reformation in theſe laſt times.

It is a remarkable paſſage which worthy Mr. *Forbes* ſets down under his hand, whilſt he was baniſhed for the truth; whoſe words are theſe. *In the year* 1607. *being at* Ruan *in* France, *and meeting with Monſieur* Figureus *that ancient and famous divine, and then paſtor of the reformed church in that city, he had from him this following relation: After the cloſe of the Councel of* Trent *in the time of* Pius V. *there was a conſultation in* Italy *by the* Pope *and* Cardinals, *for an utter extirpation of the reformed churches in* Europe; *and to this end every Prince of the romiſh religion had a certain part deſigned where this great project ſhould be put in practice: The death of* Pius V. *hindred a preſent proſecuting of this deſign. And his ſucceſſor* Gregorius XIII. *did ſuffer it to lie dead having no heart that way, and ſo until that time of* Clemens VIII. *it was not revived, but then this bloody reſolution was of new ratified by him, and his cardinals under their hands and ſeals; the only difficulty was in this, to find a fit and truſty perſon whom they ſhould make uſe of to the Princes of the romiſh religion, for engaging them to ſubſcribe the ſaid ordinance, and ſet about the execution thereof: At length a gentleman of good parts, near in blood to the cardinal* Baronius *is choſen, which to him was a matter of much grief and ſorrow, for unknown to them he was of the reformed religion, but this grief in his countenance and carriage, put his friends who obſerved the ſame to ſtrange thoughts, and ſo much the more, that he did expreſly declare to ſome of theſe who ask'd there anent, that what to them ſeemed a cauſe of rejoycing, was to him a juſt occaſion of grief, yet at laſt finding his hazard upon a bitter challenge from the fore ſaid cardinal who had heard thereof, he judged it his wiſdom to diſſemble, ſhewing him his unſuitableneſs to ſo great an employment could not but be ground of trouble and fear; and ſo was ſome way forced to engage getting his commiſſions, the decree of the Conclave, with letters to the foreſaid princes, ſealed and ſubſcribed: But lo whilſt this poor gentleman is on his journey, having found ways to free himſelf of his ſervants and other company, his ſpirit was in great perplexity betwixt theſe two grievous temptations, either to be inſtrument of utter ruin to the truth, and churches of Chriſt, or forſake his country, inheritance and all he had in the world, upon which he reſolved to retire himſelf out of the high way to an obſcure village, where for three days he gave himſelf to faſting and prayer for direction and reſolution from the Lord, and after this had his heart ſo ſtrengthned againſt the care of his worldly eſtate, that he reſolved to forſake all, and to reveal this bloody conſpiracy to the churches of Chriſt, and caſt himſelf on God's hand for his future eſtate, ſo that he turned his face from* Spain, *and took journey to* France *and to* Paris, *where at that time remained the ſiſter of* Henry IV. *a religious Princeſs, afterwards Dutcheſs of* Lorrain, *to whom the foreſaid Monſieur* Figureus *was her preacher, and unto him made his addreſs (though after divers refuſals of admiſſion upon ſuſpicion) ſhewing him the whole buſineſs, and delivered the ſealed decree with his letters of commiſſion for that effect, and did likewiſe ſhew him (who was then aſtoniſhed at ſuch a wonderful providence of God, in foſter-*

ing ſome of his own children in the midſt of Babylon, *and that to ſo comfortable an uſe for his churches ſafety*) *that there were many others in* Italy, *yea, in* Rome *it ſelf of the reformed religion, who had their ſecret meetings, and even* Gregory XIII. *before his advancement to the papacy was throughly clear there anent in his judgment, whereof he gave him divers evidences: This foreſaid relation did ſo affect Mr.* Forbes, *that he ſhewed his marvelous deſire to ſee that man who had done ſo worthy and gracious a work for the glory of God and good of his church, and by a recommendation from Monſieur* Figureus, *he did afterwards go of ſet purpoſe to that place, taking the firſt opportunity for* Heidelberg, *where this gentleman was then retired for his further ſecurity, and honourably entertain'd by that Prince, where he ſheweth that he ſaw him, and from his own mouth received the aſſurance of this former narration to his great ſatisfaction and comfort: This is the very ſum which I have here ſet down and truly tranſcribed off the principle, which I had beſide me, both written and ſubſcribed by Mr.* Forbes's *own hand.*

A remarkable providence I ſhall alſo here ſet down, which did tryſt with ſome very convincing circumſtances at the Parliament 1621. at their bring-
' ing in of *popiſh ceremonies* upon the *church*, which was then a ſad ſtep of the
' lands defection from the truth, contrary to their engagements; whilſt the
' faithful miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt at that time did with greateſt ſeriouſneſs and
' freedom obteſt, and warn theſe who were in power (alaſs, that now there
' is little of ſuch a ſpirit appearing) that they would not, to pleaſe men, cor-
' rupt the worſhip of God, but the ſpeat being violent, it did at laſt reſolve
' in a law; at which very time, whilſt the King's commiſſioner did riſe from
' the throne to ratify this woful act, by the touch of the ſcepter, was even in
' this moment of that ratification tryſted by the God of Heaven, with an ex-
' traordinary lightning, and very unuſual great claps of thunder, and theſe
' followed with a moſt ſtrange and extraordinary darkneſs, which both for
' the ſuddaineſs and greatneſs of the ſame did aſtoniſh and affright all who
' were preſent, and after all, ſo violent a down-pouring of rain, as made the
' ſtreets to run like a river, impriſoning the Lords within that houſe for an
' hour and an half: and truly as we are not hereon to lay a ſtreſs, or be pe-
' remptory in the application of particular providences, yet this was ſo very
' convincing as ſhould not be paſſed without a ſpecial remark, conſidering
' firſt how at that time many of the choice miniſters of the land, were to-
' gether near the town at faſting and prayer, bewailing before the Lord ſuch an
' avowed defection from the truth. 2. That likewiſe this horrid
' tempeſt and darkneſs appeared to theſe who were at ſome diſtance to be moſt
' directly above the town, the darkneſs overſhadowing that part only, and was
' not ſo in other places. 3. That they had by the inſtigation of the *Prelates*,
' guarded the entry to the Parliament that day, leſt any miniſters ſhould have
' entred a proteſtation in behalf of the church againſt theſe articles, and thus
' thought themſelves ſecure from any oppoſition of that kind; but whilſt they
' leaſt ſuſpected, they are met with a more publick and viſible witneſs from
' Heaven againſt the ſame. 4. Which was alſo moſt ſtrange upon the
' *Monday* following, whilſt theſe acts were proclaimed, the heavens did in
' the ſame manner put on darkneſs with a moſt fearful tempeſt of thunder,
' lightning and rain, which continued all the time of their reading at the
' croſs. And truly when the Lord thus doubled his warnings, it might cry
' aloud for mens obſervation thereof.

' The breaking of that journey to *New England*, which about the year
' 1636. was ſeriouſly intended by ſome of the choice miniſters in *Ireland*,

' who

'who were then much perſecuted by the Prelates, though not from any fear 'of their own ſufferings, but with a reſpect to a further liberty to ſerve the 'Lord in the work of the goſpel, when that door was ſhut upon them in their 'own country:' This was a ſtrange and remarkable providence, and their preſervation in ſome kind miraculous, anent which theſe circumſtances are worthy to be obſerved. 1. That whilſt their veſſel amidſt a tempeſtuous ſea, and far from any land, was like a riddle with ſo many lakes; yea, the rudder of the ſhip breaking, ſo that the pilots were turned wholly hopeleſs, and could not ſee any ground of ſafety in an ordinary way, a poor ſeaman by a remarkable providence, whoſe company they had much ſhunned was made the inſtrument of preſerving the whole veſſel with a marvelous dexterity faſtning the rudder, which others had given over, as one viſibly ſent by the Lord for that end. 2. The ſtrong perſwaſion that ſome of theſe worthy miniſters had of their ſafety, which with great confidence they declared before the paſſengers, whilſt the maſter and others were giving it over as a hopeleſs buſineſs, and ſeeing a convincing neceſſity for a return, though it was very aſtoniſhing and bitter at the firſt look, yet was afterwards followed with a clear diſcovery from the Lord, as one of them with much freedom did expreſs his aſſurance to the reſt of his brethren, that ſince the Lord would not accept their ſervice in *America*, they ſhould not want work and ſervice, whither he was ſending them back by ſo remarkable a providence, as within a ſhort time was evident, the downfal of the Prelates in *Scotland* and after in *Ireland*, tryſting ſhortly upon the back thereof, ſo that it may be ſaid this was a convincing preſage thereof, the Lord by a ſtrong hand bringing back ſuch choice and uſeful inſtruments for that great harveſt which did after follow, ſo that they could not but ſay, the Lord did in a marvelous and immediate way appear in that croſs wind and ſtorm, and thereby as if with an audible voice did witneſs his mind in ſuch a diſappointment. 3. It was alſo moſt obſervable that none of theſe who on the account of their conſciences, that they might enjoy the purity of the ordinances, went in that journey were the worſe, but had a ſafe return, only ſome perſons who upon another account expecting a fat ſoil, and outward advantage in that place, and had unexpectedly ſlipt into the veſſel, did all die upon the ſea, ſave one being five in number, and it was alſo wonderful upon their return, how the Lord as he had ſtayed the rage of the ſea, did alſo ſtill the tumults of people, which they found by experience, ſo that it did evidently give a daſh, and became a terror to their adverſaries.

I muſt here alſo ſet down a very ſingular and ſtrange inſtance, we may ſay both of judgment and mercy which was in this land, not many years ago, 'a gentleman whoſe ſtile was *Waſtraw* a moſt bloody man, and otherways 'notour for profanity, but moſt in this, that it was his great work, and 'pleaſure to put difference betwixt men, and as it was at that time very eaſy 'to engage them in blood, whilſt he had thus ſtirred up a neighbour gentleman to kill an other in that place, finding him after ſore trouble in mind 'there anent, he told him more of that practice would be the beſt cure, for 'he himſelf had killed ſix, and that the firſt time he was much diſquieted, but 'the longer he did continue, it became the more eaſy. But one day whilſt 'he was on ſuch an account riding to a place where two had tryſted to decide a 'private quarrel by fighting, his horſe ſtumbles on the ſide of a ſteep rock, and 'he falls a great way down, his ſword falling out before him, yet without 'any hurt; and here by ſuch a ſtrange piece of providence did the Lord tryſt 'and break in upon his conſcience, ſo that he quits his journey, turns home 'with great trouble and remorſe, a moſt kindly change following thereon,

'and for ſome years after witneſſed much tenderneſs and repentance by his 'after walk, ſpent much time alone mourning before his death, and that day 'he died, having no viſible appearance thereof to theſe who looked on, he 'was heard in his chamber at much wreſtling in prayer, and after long con-'tinuance, theſe of the houſe were forced to break up the door, getting no 'anſwer after long knocking, they find him dead in the room, but upon his 'knees in a praying poſture; and the whole blood of his body, which from 'every paſſage thereof had iſſued out, ſweeming about him in the floor; it 'being viſible how all theſe paſſages were opened for that effect, a moſt 'aſtoniſhing inſtance, declaring this to the world, though he pardon the 'iniquity of his people, yet ſome ſins he will not let paſs without a viſible 'mark of his anger, but will take vengeance on their inventions.

'What an obſervable paſſage is that alſo, known to many yet alive, anent 'a notorious robber in the ſouth parts of this land, called *John of the Score*, 'who for many years having driven that woful trade, did one day rencoun-'ter a poor man travelling with two horſes, which he according to his cu-'ſtom takes away, the poor country man falling on his knees, did earneſtly 'beg, that for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, he would give the one again, for he had no 'more to maintain his poor family, but what he could gain by them, but it 'was in vain, he carrieth them home with him, leaving the poor man in that 'deſolate condition, but a little after he turns dumpiſh and melancholy, could 'get no reſt or quiet, not knowing the cauſe, but as he profeſſed, that theſe 'words the poor man had ſpoke to him, (though he was ſo great an atheiſt, 'that he underſtood not what he meant when he ſpake of Chriſt) were lying 'like a heavy weight upon his ſpirit, and whilſt he was ſought after for his 'robberies, he deſired his ſons to ſhift for themſelves, for he could not go out 'of the way, there being a reſtraint upon him, and ſomething within him 'that in a kind bound him from going out of the way, and thus ſtayed at his 'houſe until he was apprehended, brought in to *Edinburgh*, and there put 'in priſon; upon which a godly miniſter Mr. *Henry Blyth* with a chriſtian 'gentleman *William Cuningham*, tutor of *Bonitoun*, who had ſometimes 'known him makes a viſit, holding forth to him his miſerable eſtate, and 'the hazard of his ſoul, (for he was judged by the law to die) and amongſt 'other words ſhewing him the neceſſity to flee to Jeſus Chriſt, he doth ſud-'denly break out with a cry,' *O what word is that, for it hath been my death, that is the word that hath lyen upon my heart ſince the poor man ſpake it to me; ſo that I had no power from that time to go out of the way*, and after being told what an one Chriſt was, without whom he could not be ſaved, he cryerh: *O will he ever look to me, and ſhew mercy that for his ſake would not ſhew mercy to that poor man, and give him back his horſe*, but after further inſtruction, a moſt real and gracious change did appear upon him, he gave moſt convincing evidences of the reality thereof, attained to great aſſurance before his death, and upon the ſcaffold in the publick ſtreets where he was executed, did ſpeak ſo wonderfully of the Lord's dealing with him, and with ſuch knowledge and judgment, as left a conviction on all preſent, and forced them to ſee a truth and reality in the grace of God.

An other notable inſtance of grace, with a very remarkable paſſage in his condition, I ſhall here mention, one *Patrick Mackelwrath*, who lived in the 'weſt parts of *Scotland*, whoſe heart the Lord in a remarkable way touched, 'and after his converſion, as he ſhewed to many of his chriſtian friends, was 'in ſuch a frame, ſo affected with a new world wherein he was entered, the 'diſcoveries of God, and of a life to come, that for ſome months together 'he did ſcarce ever ſleep, but was ſtill taken up in wondring, his life was 'very remarkable for tenderneſs, and near converſe with God in his walk,

'and which was worthy to be noticed, one day after a ſharp trial, having his 'only ſon ſuddenly taken away by death, he retired alone for ſeveral hours, 'and when he came forth did look ſo chearfully that to thoſe who asked him 'the reaſon thereof, and wondered at the ſame in ſuch a time, he told them 'he had got that in his retirement with the Lord, that to have it afterwards 'renewed he would be content to loſe a ſon every day. This one remark-'able paſſage I would ſet down, it had been long his burden the want of 'memory that he could retain almoſt nothing of what he heard from the 'word, and bitterly complaining thereof to worthy Mr. *James Engliſh*, 'miniſter of *Daly*, his counſel to him was, when he heard any truth which 'he deſired to remember to hold it up to the Lord, and deſire him to keep 'it for him, and give him it back according to his need, which accordingly 'this bleſſed man did with much ſeriouſneſs practiſe, and on his death bed, 'to his miniſter and divers chriſtians that were preſent, he did ſolemnly de-'clare how wonderfully the Lord had anſwered, and condeſcended to him in 'that particular, for as they knew how much formerly it had been his bur-'den the want of memory, now the Lord had given him back all theſe truths 'that he had put in his keeping, ſo that what for many years before he had 'heard, was now moſt clearly brought to his remembrance, which he wit-'neſſed by repeating many particular truths, and notes of ſermons which 'at ſuch times he had heard'.

Now to ſhut up this, we have truly cauſe to ſay even from late experience, ſince this dark night came upon the church in theſe nations, with ſo ſharp a ſtorm of perſecution, there hath not wanted ſome very ſignal and convincing providences witneſſing the Lord's appearance for his people, and againſt their enemies, which are worthy of a remark, and may let men ſee that there is one higher than the higheſt, who ruleth in the kingdoms of the children of men, for it is manifeſt.

1. How eminently the Lord did appear in breaking that party who had been the great inſtruments both in counſel and action, to break the govern-ment of the church of Chriſt in this land, and lay ſo much of his vineyard waſte and deſolate, and this in the height of their power and greatneſs, whilſt they ſeemed moſt firmly rooted. O how evident was a divine hand there, that this cabal who made it their great work to raiſe up prelacy and oppreſs the poor church, and like a violent tempeſt did carry all before them in a moment, when they could have leaſt expected, ſhould be made to fall, yea, in ſo ſhort a time be turned out of their places and offices, who but a little before had turned out ſo many of the faithful miniſters of Chriſt; and that great man, who put forth his power and authority, ſo much to turn many of the godly of the Land both miniſters and others, out of their houſes and families, toſſing them from place to place, ſhould thus be dealt with ſtom the Lord, and recompenced with that meaſure, being forced to quit his lodg-ing once and again, yea, even to baniſh himſelf out of the country, who had been the chief inſtrument to baniſh ſome of the moſt choice ſervants of Chriſt, and this ſtroke alſo made to try them from that hand whence they could have leaſt expected, whoſe intereſt they ſtudied to promote in oppoſition to Gods; I ſhould deſire to ſtudy ſobriety, and fear in application of the judgments of God, but when the Lord doth ſo clearly reveal himſelf and ſhew forth ſuch an evident reſemblance, betwixt mens ſin and their ſtroke, I think it cries aloud for a ſerious obſerving thereof.

2. Should we paſs without a remark, ſo ſolemn a witneſs from the Lord of his reſpect to his peoples ſufferings in this late time? for it is known, with what marvelous reſolution and chearfulneſs, theſe have been carried through, who were called forth to reſiſt unto the blood in their adherence to

the

the truth, witneſſing to the conviction of on-lookers even their greateſt enemies, ſomething above Roman gallantry, yea, ſomething above nature in that ſtayedneſs and elevation of their ſpirits, and as ſome of all ranks in the land the Lord would have brought forth to ſeal and witneſs his truth, and the work of reformation, ſo it hath been alſo clear, that none wanted a large meaſure of ſupport and ſtrength for the trial, their ſuffering ſtill giving a further daſh to their adverſaries.

3. It is alſo manifeſt, and may be truly matter of wonder, by what a marvelous providence ſo many ſuffering and deſolate families have been carried through without any obvious noiſe of their ſtraits, now for theſe divers years, with ſuch convincing chearfulneſs, yea, the experience of many made to witneſs that they never leſs knew a ſtrait, than ſince they were put from the ordinary means of their ſupport, and others who have been more ſharply tried, could not reckon any ſuch plunging ſtrait and difficulty, but have alſo found out-gate by ſome remarkable providence tryſted, I am very ſure amongſt other advantages yet of theſe times, this ſhall be one, a large regiſter of experience, and remarkable confirmations of the truth of the word and promiſe, which the godly have had under this ſharp trial, that will be ſweet matter for an after reckoning, and a greater gain than any loſs their former ſufferings did occaſion, yea, have we not ſeen, what in an ordinary way looked as irrecoverable, a ſtroke which a generation could not have made up, hath been a means the Lord hath chooſe to promote his glory, and thereby declare himſelf to be God, hath he not made us ſee, how eaſy it is for him to turn the ſharpeſt ſtorm to the great advantage of his church, that he can act in deſperate caſes, above the skill both of angels and men, and truly though we ſhould be brought yet more low even to the place of dragons, this may uphold the ſhaking hearts of his people, and be ſolid ground of confidence, that Chriſt's power and faithfulneſs is this day engaged for his church and truth, he muſt encreaſe, his kingdom is upon the riſing hand, and ſhall yet have a more glorious appearance in the world, what ever become of inſtruments, the reviving of his work is not in the reverence of men; and ſince we know the Lord hath ſolemnly declared war againſt Antichriſt, and all who will oppoſe the ſpreading of the goſpel in theſe laſt times, yea, hath paſt his word to the church, for the fall and ruin of that adverſary, fall he muſt, though the duſt of the earth ſhould ariſe for that end, and it is ſure prelacy muſt alſo wither, that hath its life and ſap from that accurſed root; they have this day a deſperate cauſe in hand, who do engage their power to ſupport the throne of the beaſt, for they run in the way of the wrath and vengeance of the Lord, and ſhall ſurely involve themſelves in that ruin; tho' they were the greateſt princes of the earth. I ſhall only add, we have much ground in theſe times to believe that the Lord ſhall yet appear, and make himſelf known in the earth, by as great and convincing providences both of judgment and mercy, as in any former ages, and thus vindicate his glory, and refute the atheiſm of this generation, by ſuch an argument as ſhall force iniquity to ſtop its mouth.

Now ſince this is ſure, which none can get denied if they will but allow ſome ſerious thoughts there anent, that the ſcripture falleth not to the ground, for *Gods way is perfect and his word is tryed*, Pſ. xviii. 30. O is it not alſo ſure, and a concluſion well grounded that *he is a buckler to thoſe who truſt in him*, none needs fear to venture his intereſts through time on the word, yea, if there could be any thing greater than a heaven, or eternal ſalvation, the teſtimony of the God of truth might be ſufficient ſecurity for the ſame; it is a ſmall matter how this world doth reel and ſtagger, or what be the changes of outward things, that is enough, the promiſes of the word ſhall certainly take place, and the expectation of the ſaints ſhall not make them aſhamed.

AN

APPENDIX.

IT is ſure the demonſtration of divine truth, held forth in the ſcripture, is the greateſt diſcovery, that ever came to the ſons of men; which with a more excellent light, and greater luſtre, doth enlighten theſe parts of the earth, on which it ſhines, than the ſun, in its noonday brightneſs; this is the word of life, even the hidden wiſdom of God in a myſtery, which moſt of the world do not underſtand; but flee from the ſame, as their plague and torment; but hereby the followers of God, know they are of the truth, and do aſſure their heart before him; it ſhould be matter of aſtoniſhment, if thus the ſcripture were not confirmed, to ſee what rage the breaking up of this light cauſeth amongſt men, which now in the preſent time does in a ſtrange manner appear, not againſt ſome particular truth only, and the uppermoſt boughs, but by a remarkable aſſault, ſeems to ſtrike at the root, the very being of truth and godlineſs: it may be ſaid, whilſt ſuperſtition in times of greater ignorance, did overcloud and darken the viſible church, atheiſm hath taken up its room, to wear this generation out, from under the awe of God, and weaken their aſſent to the truth; for we ſee men every where making it their work, to load his way with reproach, and put diſcredit on his faithfulneſs who is the God of truth; as a witneſs thereto is this ſmall eſſay directed, and now again comes forth to the world, with an enlargement; which I may ſay, was not intended, if there had not been a preſſing motive, from the uncorrectedneſs of the firſt impreſſion, and for this, I ſhall make no further apology: but if a ſubject of ſo great an import, ſuffer no prejudice from ſuch an unfit pen, the favourable teſtimony of men, or their cenſures, I ſhould deſire to look on (as they are indeed) at a diſtance and far below that ſolid peace of the ſoul, which in the acceptation of God, is alone to be found: what acceſs it may have to many of this generation, I know not, who are taking all advantage to ſtrengthen their prejudice at the truth, and unſettle others therein; it is like ſuch may paſs their judgment thereon at the firſt look, and throw it aſide. But as a miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, who believes an appearing before the judge, and would deſire mercy to be found faithful in that day, being preſſed in ſome meaſure upon the horrid appearance of the atheiſm and blaſphemy of the time, with that avowed indifferency, now within the viſible church, in theſe great intereſts of religion, and godlineſs, I lay this witneſs to the truth at their door; and ſhall here offer a few thoughts further on this ſubject, in ſome clear *Inferences*, from that great truth of the verification of the ſcripture.

Inference I. Which we may ſee clear, is this, *The great advantage a chriſtian hath for his eſtabliſhment; that his ſecurity is indeed greater than his intereſt, or any thing he hath to adventure thereon;* and ſure, that is not ſmall; ſince the matter is of no leſs earneſt, beſides his concernments through time, than an eternity, a *heaven*, or the hazard of *hell* for ever. This muſt

require a ſolid, and ſure foundation, yea we may judge the furtheſt degree of certainty, where the ſuperſtructure is ſo great; for it is not opinion, or a probable conjecture, can be a ſuitable baſis, to bear up that weight; but here, to anſwer ſuch an intereſt, and give through quiet and repoſe to the ſoul, we have the truth, and teſtimony of God, with this great witneſs thereto, that it aſſuredly takes place, and not one ſyllable falls to the ground, without an evident performance. There are two things which, I am ſure, men could not, with ſuch ordinary thoughts conſider, yea think thereon, without amazement, if they made it not their choice, to keep at a diſtance: One is, *That ſuch a thing is in the world this day as the very word of God, that is more ſure, than an audible voice from heaven, to declare his whole counſel, and hold forth unto men the true way up towards that country; and does thus marvelouſly diſcover it ſelf.* 1. To come ſo low down, even his word and teſtimony who ſpeaks from heaven, that therewith it hath a ſolemn appeal to mens ſenſe and feeling anent its certainty. 2. Which commends it ſelf upon the neareſt approach, and found the more valuable and of the greater price, the more it is ſearched into by an inquiry. 3. That though clear and plain in it ſelf, yet by a ſupernatural light and evidence can only be known, which no human ſagacity nor reaſon in its higheſt elevation, without this can reach; but riſeth far above the greateſt capacity, and enduements, of which by nature, the moſt excellent ſpirits of men can boaſt. In a word, when once it ſhines in upon the ſoul, does then diſcernibly ſtamp the very ſame image thereon, and begets ſuch a marvelous likeneſs betwixt them, as may ſhow the world this is a living thing. But there is a ſecond, we may alſo conſider with aſtoniſhment how great it is, *To be a chriſtian, and of what marvelous import that is*, I ſuppoſe there were but one or two ſuch, to be found in the World, who were certainly known to be partakers of the divine nature, to have a real converſe with God, and by experience with the word; might not the report thereof give men a ſtrange alarm? yea put them upon an impatient ſearch and inquiry, to know if this be ſure, and what ſuch a diſcovery means: O is it ſmall to be the ſon of a king! but the hope and claim of a chriſtian riſeth higher, and hath another reach, that ſuch within a ſhort time, whilſt now in ſo mean a garb, ſhall be aſſuredly entered into glory, in the immediate enjoyment of God, and of the fulneſs of joy among that triumphant ſociety of the angels, the prophets, and apoſtles, and all theſe who are before the throne, waſhed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb, and thus continue through the ages of eternity; yea in that very inſtant of the ſouls quitting the body, muſt admit ſo great a change, and enter there, where heaven only can make us know what heaven is; it is ſuch a ſtrange ſleep men are in, who in ſuch concernment, are not awakened to a further inquiry: It were well if ſome would but allow reaſon its true uſe, whilſt they travel betwixt the *Poles*, and can adventure to the furtheſt parts of the earth to purſue that, which they muſt ſo ſhortly forego: to judge ſeriouſly and bring the thoughts of this near, what a greater intereſt and at a more eaſy rate, and of an unexpreſſibly greater value, than that gold and treaſure which ever came from the *Indies*, does offer it ſelf, I ſay the profeſt atheiſm of ſome gives not more cauſe of wonder, than the ſtrange ſtupidity of others, and that common and eaſy way men have in giving an aſſent to divine truth: I do not mean from the want of evidence and perſpicuity, but becauſe of the greatneſs of the things here held forth; this was not ſo ſtrange, that we find two of the diſciples of Chriſt at a ſtand, from joy and wondering, to credit his reſurrection, even whilſt they ſaw it verifyed; ſo great was this in their eyes. Now as to this I muſt further point at two or three things, which ſeriouſly conſider-

ed, may ſeem a ſtrange contradiction to reaſon. 1. How men can find a pillow to reſt on, who certainly know their breath, for theſe few hours in the night, is not made ſure; but if by a ſudden arreſt of death it ſhould be ſtopt, which is no ſtrange thing in the world, they know not what is next; but every night, ſleeps at an adventure of being, e'er the next day, in an irrecoverable loſt eſtate, yea is not here cauſe of wonder, that whilſt we ſee time make ſuch ſwift diſpatch, dying men can be in that meaſure eſtranged from the thoughts of death, who ſo oft may hear it ſound, and the bell ringing for others, yea by previous aſſaults diſcern its approach on themſelves, which once come, then man goes off the ſtage, to return no more, nor ſhall he for all the ages of eternity ever act that ſcene of life, here over again. 2. How ſtrange it is that the ſuppoſal of the truth and certainty of the ſcripture, that ſuch a thing may be, does not more alarm men, and mar their quiet; or that they can ſo much as think of an eternal eſtate without trembling, whilſt they are at no ſolid determination in ſuch a matter; yea when the ſcripture of God does not only witneſs a heaven and immortality, but ſhews the world, there is ſuch a thing as the firſt fruits, and earneſt of it, whereof men here may be fully aſſured. I would know, if ſuch an atheiſm is to be found, that puts the atheiſt beyond fear and doubting, even in his moſt profeſſed confidence, and ſcoffing at the truth, or can ſufficiently ſalve that heart aking, and continued heſitation he is under, that ſuch a thing may be true. 3. I ſhall add it is matter of wonder men ſhould admit the report and atteſtation of others, anent the truth and reality of godlineſs, who yet live ſtrangers to it themſelves, yea ſhould be at ſome toil and pains, and come a length to be almoſt chriſtians, without purſuing this in greater earneſt.

Inference II. Which from the ſcriptures accompliſhment is clear, is this, *That there is a ſpecial debt on each chriſtian, on whoſe ſoul the truth and faithfulneſs of God is ſealed, to give in his ſeal thereto, and bear witneſs, that God is true.* Thus is there a mutual ſealing, which is undeniably clear, you ſee 2 *Cor.* i. 22. the Lord's putting to his ſeal, which by all his people is well known; and have you not alſo, *John* iii. 33. the chriſtian's ſeal and witneſs moſt expreſly held out and call'd for. This is indeed a duty, in which, we may ſay, the meaneſt of the ſaints wants not his part, who hath that witneſs within himſelf, whereby he knows the certainty of the words of truth, which is a great thing, that ſuch, on ſolid ground, can ſay he does not more clearly ſee the truth written in the Bible before him, than he knows and can read, but by another character, and engraving, this within him, though none elſe can read the ſame, but he who hath it. I know there is a debt to the leaſt ſcripture truth, which theſe who profeſs the ſame do owe, when a witneſs and confeſſion is call'd for, and hath thus ſpecial acceſs, in a ſuffering time, to ſet his ſeal by a cloſs adherence thereto. But we muſt ſay, this is ſomething elſe, that concerns the confirmed chriſtian, a peculiar debt he owes to the truth and faithfulneſs of his God (which his ſoul knows well, and hath had oft confirmed) to give unto him the glory of his faithfulneſs. We find *David*, *Pſalm* lxxxix. 1. thus ſpeak, as one preſſed upon ſuch a duty; and though ſome have a more ſpecial call and greater advantage to this than others, yet we may ſay, the confirming, and ſealing of the truth, is like a great and publick treaſure, wherein the meaneſt chriſtian wants not acceſs to caſt in his mite. Now for further clearing this, what the chriſtian's ſeal and atteſtation of the truth means, and what acceſs or advantage he hath for acquitting himſelf of ſuch a debt, I would point a little at, in theſe few particulars.

Firſt, It is clear, that he who believes and receives the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt, does thus ſet to his ſeal, that he is true, and ſubſcribes as it were the truth

truth and doctrine of the gospel, *John* iii. 33. 2. it is also clear, the shewing forth of the power of godliness, and the virtues of him who hath called him, is through the tract of a christian's life, a living and visible witness thereto. 3. We may judge the converted man upon that new and marvelous discovery, he hath got of the truth upon his first entering into a christian state, when he hath past that great step, and as one come into an other world, hath then a special call and advantage for such a duty, that if it were asked, what is the first service such owes to the truth? Is it not even this to commend by seal and testimony to others, what God hath so marvelously commended to his soul? And thus needs not want access to let the world know, who may wonder at such a change, that though once he was blind, he does now see, and assuredly knows the truth is the power of God to salvation, which he no more believes upon the report and testimony of others, since now he sees it with his own eyes. He then is to answer that call, *Luke* xxii. *When you are converted strengthen your brethren.* 4. When a christian is confirmed, upon some remarkable faint and staggering, and hath got a new seal of the faithfulness of God, is he not under some new debt, to restore with advantage what he had taken from the credit of the truth, and give that good report and witness thereto, which may obviate any reflection he might have caused by his faint: Sure it is the christian's testimony hath then this special advantage, to confirm others in the way of the Lord, that his former fears and shakings have been so discernible; thus we see *Hezekiah* after such a remarkable plunge and fainting, comes in with his witness, *Isa.* xxxviii. 15. *What shall I say, he hath both spoken, and himself also hath done it, &c.* And *David*, *Psal.* xxxi. 22. How concerned was he in such a duty, *I said I am cast out of thy sight, yet thou heardest the voice of my supplication.* 5. When we see Atheism much abound, and hath a publick appearance, when it is not a particular truth, but the truth and faithfulness of God is challenged, we may judge, it then calls, and calls aloud, to the godly man for his appearance, even by some more obvious testimony, than at other times to so great an interest; sure it is, when the lot of a christian is in such a time cast, and amongst a generation of mockers, he will not want access, and a special call, by a christianly grave and prudent witness, to own the truth, as that which he is obliged to seal, though there were none else; yea, we may think, this should be a call and incitement, where zeal for Jesus Christ hath got a command over his soul, as might burst his tongue strings, which before were tyed, when the faithfulness of his God, which he so oft hath proven, is by men brought in question, which to *David*, was like a sword that thrust him through, and an upcast he could not bear, when they said unto him, *where is your God?* 6. Upon the close of some sharp and remarkable trial, when the christian after a storm comes safe to land, such a new discovery he hath of the truth and faithfulness of God, lays then a new debt on him, to bear witness thereto. Is he not thus concerned not to leave the cross of Jesus Christ at a loss, which hath left him at so great an advantage, or part therewith, without such a testimony, that may endear the way of the Lord to others: Thus afflicted *Job*, after a long continued storm, comes in the close to pay the truth's rent by his seal and testimony thereto, *Job* xlii. *I have heard of thee, &c.* I hope this debt in a large measure, shall be yet found on many of this generation, when this storm is over to press their spirits for bearing such a testimony, that they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts, but have oft there been surprised with his immediate help to astonishment, *Isaiah* xlviii. 21. 7. Is not the experience of a christian, and these grave remarks he hath of the faithfulness of God, a special trust put in his hand, and a piece of his talent, that

calls

calls for his seal, as a rent which such owe to the truth, and should have some further reach, than his own personal establishment. I must say as to this, none of the saints want their peculiar engagements, which they may judge are upon them even beyond others; yea, such singular confirmation they have had of the way of the Lord, and oft with these astonishing circumstances, that to smother without some gain and advantage thence payed in to the truth, might be reckoned a stealth from the generation. We may judge such a thing press'd *David*'s soul for a vent, *Psal.* lxvi. 16. and truly something of this practice, managed with humble prudence, in a grave intercourse and communication of some special confirmations of the truth, were a choice improvement of christian society and fellowship, I confess to manage this well, seems one of the most difficult pieces of duty a christian owes to others, and I humbly judge may be mistaken in its chief end, by too much dwelling sometimes on the cases of a christian, and debating these, to which their light and judgment may give more arise than a present pressure and weight of the same; the multiplying of which I have oft looked on as a darkning the solid and plain way of godliness, and making it perplex and thornie, which lies in little bounds, when well understood: but we see, what a special improvement of christian fellowship is held forth, *Mal.* iii. 16. for their mutual joy and establishment in the truth, in a time when it was in question, what advantage there is to serve the Lord? I should wish so excellent a mean were more directed to this end: Nor should this mar such a duty that there may be an empty show and counterfeit of that also, and the shalloweſt brooks sometime make the greatest noise. 8. Here is a special call for the christian's seal and witness to the truth, under some remarkable exigence and strait, whilst throng'd with manifold temptations, then is he concerned by his appearance, to shew forth the faithfulness of God, and his testimony thereto, that may let others know, who in such times will be great observers of his way, that he is satisfyed with God, and with the security of his word to rest on, when he hath no resting place elsewhere; that he thinks not his burden too great to roll over on the promise; but hath this to say in behalf of the truth, *persecuted but not forsaken*; *cast down, yet not destroyed.* You may see the apostle paying such a debt on this account, *having nothing I possess all things*, 2 *Cor.* vi. 10. lastly, I must say, a call to this duty, waits the christian, in a special manner, at the close of his day, then, O then, is he concerned to acquit himself of that debt, by commending the way of the Lord, and confirming others therein. Would it not be a choice appendix to the *Testament*, and latter will of a dying christian, to seal with his breath the faithfulness of God, and then when his words are of more weight than at other times, bear this witness, that through the various steps of his life, he knows God is true, and hitherto hath helped. It is sure the present day hath its duty, and each remarkable time of ones life, hath some proper work: But this I must say seems to fall in, as the last service of a dying christian to this generation, to deliver the truth off his hand which he had received and oft proved, with his seal and testimony thereto: this were to bequeath a choice legacy to others.

It is not here understood, that particular rules can be given for the practice of this duty, but christian wisdom is profitable to direct, as occasion offers, and the present case circumstantiate; but sure it is, each christian is thus a witness, and as it were judicially sisted in behalf of that attribute of the faithfulness of God, to attest by his seal as a confirmatory sign thereof, that God is true; and as there is an implicite seal by believing, there is something more explicite than called for, in times which seem to evacuate the promise, when the reality of

godlineſs is ſo expreſly impugned by the adverſary as fanaticiſm; and theſe things I ſhall further add; 1. That through the whole ſcripture, we ſee in frequent inſtances, how much the ſaints have been thus taken up, and in theſe times of the church, when there was not ſuch acceſs an other way, to keep up a remembrance of the faithfulneſs of God, and tranſmit a teſtimony thereto, we find a pillar and ſtone of witneſs erected, as 1 *Sam.* vii. 12. 2. Thus hath the chriſtian acceſs, in the returns of thankfulneſs to God, no mercy being ſo ſmall, on which his faithfulneſs is not engraven, as we find *David* often, and *Jacob*, *Gen.* xxxii. 10. and ſure it is, the diſcovery of this to an obſerving chriſtian, hath ſometimes a greater joy and ſatisfaction therewith, than the mercy in which it appears; I muſt ſay, it is a great want in that excellent duty when ſome teſtimony to the faithfulneſs of God is not carried on therewith. 3. Hath not the chriſtian an occaſional call thereto, when ever this lies in his way to ſpeak to its credit, and bear his witneſs? We may ſee the truth and faithfulneſs of God came never *David*'s way, but we find him ſpeak honourably thereof, from the ſenſe of his peculiar engagements. 4. There is no piece of a chriſtian's ſuffering ſtated on a particular truth, but a confeſſion is therewith called for, of the faithfulneſs of God; thus to bear witneſs before the world, that he does not offend nor is aſhamed of the croſs of Chriſt, becauſe he knows whom he hath believed; whilſt others by chooſing ſin, rather than affliction, do what in them lieth to make God a liar.

Inference III. From the ſcriptures accompliſhment is, *That as there is a perſonal debt on the chriſtian, there is a publick debt alſo on the church, and a ſpecial truſt repoſed on every age thereof to ſeal the truth, and deliver that great intereſt off its hand, to the ages to come, with a witneſs to the faithfulneſs of God.* The ſcripture herein is clear, yea, we have it in an expreſs propheſy held forth, *Pſal*, cxlv. 4, 5, 6. that one generation in a continued ſeries, ſhould ſeal the truth to another, and thus carry forward a witneſs to the ſame: For each time hath ſome peculiar rent, which it ſhould pay to the poſterity, from a new addition of the great and remarkable works of the Lord; and it is ſure, the greater things he hath witneſſed, by his more eminent appearance for the church, in one age beyond another, does add to this debt, and puts ſome further engagements upon it, to record and tranſmit the works of the Lord, and the memory of his goodneſs to after times. Now with reſpect to this grave truth, I would offer a few particulars (which, this day we may ſadly regrate, are ſo much wanting) wherein ſomething of this debt, that one age of the church owes to another, in behalf to the truth, may appear.

1. It may be judged a debt on the church to the poſterity, to purſue that great intereſt of the truth by an adding further, or confirming of the faith of the ſaints therein from that diſcovery, and peculiar advantages the preſent time affords; and thus effectually endeavour to advance the repute and credit of the truth, on ſolid demonſtrative grounds of its certainty. This hath the greater call, when it is ſo much the work of the time, and of not a few labouring therein to ſhake and unſettle men, as to this great foundation, yea, ſo much written that hath a viſible tendency to this end. One thing particularly ſhould be wiſhed, that the publick records of every age as they concern the church did carry therewith more clearly, ſome hiſtory of the verification of the truth, by tranſmitting theſe great and conſpicuous remarks of the way of God with the church to the poſterity, by which the ſcripture then hath been ſignally confirmed: thus ſhould one age declare its faithfulneſs to the next, which were a choice piece of ſervice, being gravely, and with caution managed. 2. This debt doe s the church owe to the poſterity, with re-

ſpect to the truth, to endeavour its tranſmitting purely, and without hurt and prejudice; for it is to the church the oracles of God are committed, and for that great truſt, muſt ſhe in every time be reſponſable: but as to this, I muſt ſay, that piece of truth of God, which is more ſharply aſſaulted, and hath endured greateſt oppoſition from the adverſe party, makes this debt the greater, to deliver that off her hand, with all care and circumſpection, yea, it is a duty lies at each chriſtian's door, when called to give a confeſſion of the ſame; but as no private appearance can anſwer to a publick record and monument, it is thence clear in a time of great incroachment on the truth, when a remarkable breach is like to be made, and the aſſault not from a private adverſary, but a publick formidable combination of a party, ſome more ſolemn authoritative, and unite concurrence is then called for, in the church's teſtimony, for her exoneration, that with ſuch an advantage, may witneſs to the ages to come, whereat their fathers left, how they held out and wreſtled to keep their ground in defence of the goſpel; this we may ſay, is like the caſting up of a bank, to guard againſt a further breach, when the enemy comes in like a flood: and it is known the confeſſions of the church in every age, with ſuch a publick teſtimony to the truth, whilſt followed with viſible hazard and ſuffering, have been more effectually ſubſervient to the truth's conſervation, than all the diſputes of men; this did they overcome, *Rev.* xii. 7. by the blood of the lamb, and the word of their teſtimony. 3. This ſpecial debt alſo is upon the church, with a reſpect to the poſterity, to contend for the truth once delivered to the ſaints, and but once, ſince it can admit no change or alteration to the ſecond coming of the Lord. O how bleſſed a debate and ſtrife this is, though in ſuch an intereſt reſiſting to the blood ſhould be called for. But whileſt I mention this duty, it cannot be underſtood, with reſpect to that great intereſt of religion only, or the weightier matters of the law, that are more fundamental, whilſt under a profeſſed zeal to theſe, a latitude and indifferency in other concernments of the truth is ſheltered. It is indeed ſtrange, though no ſtrange thing in this time. But let me ask, can a piece of truth held forth in the ſcripture, be of that low value, to warrant the quitting or yielding up of it when brought in debate, when one line of this is of more ineſtimable worth, than the crowns and ſcepters of all the monarchs of the earth? Sure it is, the God of truth hath prized it at another rate, who declares heaven and earth ſhould rather fall, than one title of his word periſh; and can theſe in greater things be faithful, who are not thus in a little? It is too clearly ſeen, how ſmall an yielding makes a great breach. Truths comparatively ſmall, may be great in their ſeaſon, when they are the word of his patience; yea, we may ſay the leſſer it ſeems, and of mean value with many, it makes the chriſtian's adherence thereto a greater teſtimony. It is clear, what a cloſs concatenation there is amongſt the truths of God, held forth in the ſcripture that one part thereof cannot be reached, without a ſpecial prejudice to the whole; yea, it may be ſaid, every corruption of the truth hath an aim at the very ſoul of religion, by a direct tendency thereto. 4. It is a great duty the church owes the poſterity, for which this day, there ſeems a more than ordinary call to ſtudy the tranſmitting of truth and godlineſs, not in a naked form only, but in the life and power thereof. Sure it is now too obvious, which gives ground both for grief and aſtoniſhment, that through a large part of the reformed church, and in theſe places, where ſometime the truth hath brightly ſhined with much ſtate and warmneſs; yea, where religion in its purity, is yet profeſſedly countenanced, and the worſhip of God owned, even there we may ſee the power and ſpirituality of this, is a ſtrange and unknown thing, that by many within the church, and of ſome repute therein,

therein, it might be queſtioned, is there indeed a Holy Ghoſt, and an inward teaching of the ſpirit, which by its working and efficacious influences, is known upon the ſoul? Or, is there ſuch a thing as real fellowſhip and converſe with God, in the ſecret, and more publick duties of a chriſtian, that is aſſuredly found? Oh what cauſe is there to fear the ſhadow and form be quickly gone, when the power thereof, is ſo great a myſtery. I know it is a ſore challenge, and may ſeem ſtrange to ſome. I do here profeſs it is not to reflect on any place, or particular church by another. But we may ſay this want and decay is too great and univerſal to be hid; and now the tide ſeems ſo far ſpent and gone back, yea, ſmall appearance of its return, and the church of Chriſt at that paſs, that if the faithfulneſs of God were not ſurety, which ſtands good for all, we might upon ordinary appearance judge nothing elſe is left, but now to your tents every man, that each one ſhould ſhift for himſelf, and give over the church: but ſure I am (I bleſs the Lord without debate in this matter) upon a beter warrand than appearance, our ſafety is this day to keep by the veſſel, and not part intereſts with an afflicted and almoſt ſinking church; a publick ſpirit may yet be found the choiceſt way to ſecure a private intereſt. Oh! what do we ſee? is not almoſt every where mens hands upon their loyns, and ſo little inquiry, in that extreme exigence, what piece of duty can yet be eſſayed, to get religion up again, which now is at ſo ſore a backſet: we might hope a great out-coming ſhould be where little is expected, even upon a ſmall ſtirring of duty. Some things, I am ſure, are to be wiſhed, that would be of ſingular uſe to promote this intereſt, which I ſhall very briefly point at.

First, It ſhould be wiſhed this great mean of prayer, yet left to the church, were with more ſingleneſs and fervency improven, both by the chriſtian alone, and in converſe with others. This is well known in the moſt dark and diſmal times of her condition, what marvelous help it hath brought at a choke, when it hath ſeem'd in ſome manner *ultimus conatus Eccleſiæ*, and all other things gone. O a ſpirit of prayer, what advantage hath remarkably followed upon this, to fetch the wind, yea to get the veſſel as it were put afloat when it hath been a low ebb with the church, to haſten her delivery; and in the mean time keep her wounds bleeding, before the Lord; we may ſay, thus hath the meaneſt of the ſaints acceſs to do a great piece of ſervice, even to the church univerſal, and the recovery again of the power of godlineſs, that is now ſo far gone. 2. With reſpect to this, it is to be wiſhed, that a greater correſpondence through the reformed churches were more effectually purſued, to know others caſe, what eminent hazard appears to the truth, or ſore trial and aſſault ſome particular church may have beyond others, for witneſſing mutual ſympathy, for communication of counſels, the obviating prejudices and miſtakes, a grave incitement and upſtirring of others, to the duty of the time, and thus a further concurrence endeavoured, in promoting the great intereſt of the goſpel. Oh ſad, that ſince the Reformation brake up, how little of this hath been practiſed, but now much more gone, that except by ordinary travellers, or ſometime publick *Gazets* the great concernments of the neighbouring churches, and the more remarkable occurrents of providence therein are but little known. I ſhould account it a token for good, if ſomething of a publick ſpirit, with reſpect to ſuch a mean, did more appear. We know not what advantage might follow this eſſay. 3. This ſhould be wiſhed, and might be a notable and uſeful help, yea of no great difficulty, now whilſt there is ſuch plodding in religion, by airy notions, as if that great intereſt were the eſſay of mens wit and invention, to ſtudy the turning over of ſome of our choice *Engliſh* pieces, in other languages, which do moſt nervouſly hold forth the truth of godlineſs, both in its ſimplicity, and in the life

and

and power thereof. Such as are moſt fit to put men on another ſcent, for bringing the naked ſpeculation of truth down to that more near feeling, and abſolutely neceſſary ſoul-converſe therewith; yea ſuch as with greateſt clearneſs, might ſhew the world ſomething of the ineſtimable advantage of that excellent ſtudy, how well godlineſs ſuits, and is a ſingular help in every calling and condition of men, to make their way eaſy and pleaſant, amidſt the plunges of their life: but eſpecially, that may hold forth the indiſpenſible neceſſity thereof. It is ſad to think in what a meaſure excellent holineſs is wounded, and darkened by ſo great a cloud of prejudice, almoſt through the reformed church, which is much pretended, upon the extravagance and unſuitable practice of many profeſſing the ſame, and yet ſo little care to obviate and prevent this. 4. I muſt further add what, I am ſure, is to be wiſhed, when ſo ſmall ground ſeems of hope therein, and calls now for much prayer, to ſee a ſpiritual and faithful miniſtry, given to the church, of whom it might be ſaid, theſe are the Ambaſſadors of Jeſus Chriſt, with their maſter's authority impreſſed on them; who in earneſt do travel in birth, to have Chriſt formed in their hearers, and preach with a feeling of that they ſpeak, to themſelves, as well as to others, ſuch who truly watch for mens ſouls, with an awful impreſſion of that, leſt their blood be required at their hands. How great a bleſſing ſhould this be to a decayed church, and what a ground of hope were it of a recovery, for it's ſeen and clearly witneſſed, that connection which is betwixt the church's caſe, and miniſtry thereof. Was it not ſeen at the breaking up of the goſpel, and the marvelous ſucceſs it had in the beginning of the reformation after that long darkneſs under antichriſt, his reign, how choice and excellent a miniſtry was then ſent forth; yea what a remarkable conſtellation of great lights did appear, who did both burn and ſhine in their time. Oh! theſe are gone, and but a few comparatively with that time of ſuch a ſpirit to be found: but this ſad remark we cannot ſhun, that the greateſt plague the chriſtian world and much of the reformed church, this day, is under, is from the watchmen, by whom the truth, in its power hath been more wounded, than by its moſt profeſſed adverſaries. I know there wants not ſuch a horrid party in this time, who take advantage to reflect on and decrie that excellent office and appointment of Jeſus Chriſt for his church, becauſe of the abuſe thereof, whom I dare not from the awe of God, anſwer in their dialect which is only railing, and is all their ſtrength: but the Lord rebuke that evil ſpirit now abroad in the world. Whilſt I ſpeak to that great advantage the church and the power of religion hath by a faithful miniſtry; I muſt further add this, as a debt the preſent generation owes to the poſterity, to witneſs a particular care and reſpect to ſuch who are looking forth with ſome aim to this great calling, that in ſo ſadning a day theſe might be incouraged and ſtired up (I mean where there is ſome promiſing appearance) to follow their look and not faint when difficulties ſeem to grow in their way, and the ſickle now taken out of the hand of many faithful labourers, but eſpecially for their taking alongs, with other ſtudies that more excellent ſtudy, ſanctification, which is ſo indiſpenſibly neceſſary to make able miniſters of the *New Teſtament*. Sure theſe have now a ſpecial advantage to witneſs their love and reſpect to Jeſus Chriſt, who keeps their face that way forward, when there ſeems no other incitement but the ſervice of ſuch a maſter, they may have mean appearance and at this day conflict with many difficulties, on whom great ſervice may yet wait for the church of Chriſt.

Inference IV. It is a duty of ſpecial uſe with reſpect to a right underſtanding and diſtinct uptaking of the fulfilling of the ſcripture, *To diſcern the times and enquire ſeriouſly there-anent*; ſince it is clear, that in particular ages and pe-

riods of time, the ſcripture muſt take place, and the prophecies thereof which relate to each period of time have their particular and exact accompliſhment therein. It is ſure this can be no matter of debate that ſuch a duty is called for, in ſo dark an hour upon the church, yea the greater the darkneſs grows, it ſeems to have a more preſſing call; when we ſee the clouds gathering, that they are like to cover the face of the skie: the church univerſal ſo ſore benighted, that ſhe hath almoſt loſt her way amidſt theſe miſts and among the multitude of theſe by-paths, for then it is not only incumbent on the publick watchmen, but we may ſay, concerns the godly every where to be on this accompt ſeers, to know the time, and what *Iſrael* ought to do: ſure it is, no chriſtian wants his watch tower, where he may get up, by a near converſe with God in the ſcripture, and thence as from a great height to conſider the preſent time, yea have a clear view of the moſt ſtrange, perplexing occurrents thereof, how amidſt theſe, his work about the church, keeps its way, and moves ſtill forward, without loſing of ground; and his truth does convincingly take place. Now with reſpect to this, I ſhall here offer ſome thoughts, what in ſo neceſſary a duty, concerns the godly; and calls for their ſerious enquiry, for a right diſcovery and underſtanding of the time, and ſhall ſhortly touch it in a few particulars.

FIRST, It is of great import to know from the ſcripture, what of the night it is, how far it ſeems to be ſpent, and now in what watch thereof the church is fallen, as to her preſent ſtate; for thus we might know to what period of her condition, theſe great and remarkable things which fall out in the world do relate; this, I confeſs, ſhould be a perplex buſineſs, if the appearance of things were our guide, and wanted that bleſſed conduct of the written word, when the church's way ſeems involved in ſo ſtrange a labyrinth; one thing is ſure, that the Lord hath founded *Zion*, and is now building her up: which marvelous work cannot halt, but in all ages is in a continued progreſs, wherein the great builder doth loſe no time; and from the ſcripture theſe things ſeem clear and manifeſt.

1. That as the whole election muſt obtain, ſo now are there a great many of that elect church already entered into a triumphant condition and are now got ſafe on ſhoar, there is this day a great and innumerable company of all *Nations*, *Tongues* and *Languages*, who were of old committed to the *Mediator's* truſt, and to be brought forth under the times of the *New Teſtament*, perfected and before the throne, after whom the goſpel did follow, and made many a long ſtep to bring in from the furtheſt corners of the earth. 2. This alſo is clear, that the church militant hath now paſt, and is gone through, that long continued, and moſt diſmal trial, which under the times of the goſpel, until the cloſe of time was to go over her head, even that ſore bondage from antichriſt and under his reign, it is true this adverſary does not ceaſe, nor give over the quarrel, for he wants not wrath, when his power is abated; and this day we ſee him in a great ſtir, to have up that accurſed intereſt and ſet it in its own place, that hath ſo remarkably been brought down and begun to fall before the goſpel: but a ſtep further of that judgment (which aſſuredly is not ſleeping) will end the buſineſs; however this is now manifeſt, that the winter is paſt, and the church's ſpring begun, yea in a large meaſure advanced, whoſe growth and tender bloſſome, the cold, nor ſtorm, cannot blaſt, but muſt be ſubſervient thereto, and haſten the ſummer's approach. 3. Upon this enquiry, where the church now is, and in what, or what manner of time, her preſent ſtate ſeems to fall, I think there are clear and convincing ſymptoms by which ſome notable criſis, in her condition may be diſcerned, that after many conflicts, and ſore wreſtling ſince her victory begun

over

over Antichriſt, this time of the church ſeems to fall under that more remarkable aſſault, which may be looked for from this adverſary, before the pouring out of the fifth vial on his throne and ſeat; which as the preludium of ſo great a victory, may in ſome proportion thereto, be more dreadful and ſharp for a time; than any we have ſeen: I humbly judge the ſcripture points clearly at this, which ſhews the wreſtling condition of the church, and a war continued betwixt Antichriſt and the Lamb, even in his falling ſtate, *Rev.* xvii. 14. until that laſt deciſion (which is made ſure in the church's favour) put him off the field, *For the Lamb ſhall overcome, and they who are on his ſide, who are called choſen and faithful,* and ſince it is thus, that the church's intereſt is advanced, by the renewed aſſaults of that adverſary, ſhould it be ſtrange that the ſeveral ſteps of her riſing, have ſome conflict and oppoſition proportioned thereto? muſt ſhe not be in pain and labour, as a woman in travel for her bringing forth, yea, do not the ſharpeſt ſhowers both preſage, and haſten the delivery? for this doth the ſcripture witneſs, which is written for the ages to come, *Micah.* iv. 13. *Be in pain, O daughter of* Zion, *and go forth unto* Babylon, *for there ſhalt thou be delivered:* I muſt judge ſo formidable an approach of Antichriſt this day, and the advantage he ſeems to have, with theſe ſore ſtruglings of the church of Chriſt, as in an extreme betwixt life and death, do more promiſe than threaten; and are a hopeful preſage of a further enlargement, and the bringing forth ſome great and important truth in its ſeaſon to a performance, yea, have a direct tendency under the wonderful conduct of the bleſſed diſpoſer of theſe things, to help forward ſuch a mercy. 4. This we may know from the ſcripture, though now it ſeem a contradiction both to ſenſe and reaſon, that the church's intereſt is on a preſent advance, and at this day on the prevailing hand: It is true under all the changes of her condition, and through the whole time of the *New Teſtament*, this truth muſt be made out, *Joh.* iii. 30. that Jeſus Chriſt in his kingdom *muſt increaſe*, even when choiceſt inſtruments wear out, and to appearance in a moſt languiſhing decay; that intereſt doth then flouriſh as the palm-tree, the more it is depreſſed, nor hath the church bounds ſet to its continued increaſe, until it once come to the perfect day when the kingdom ſhall be delivered up to the father, and all powers ſubdued, and brought under the Mediator's feet; but this riſe and increaſe of the church, which is here underſtood on the falling of antichriſt, I muſt ſay, hath a further reach, and is in a more eminent conſpicuous way pointed at in the ſcripture, as that which waits on a more ſolemn and remarkable period of the church's ſtate: it is true ſuch hours may fall in, with ſome ſad intervals, in which ſucceſs and all advantage appears on the adverſaries ſide; for thus we find the ſcripture point forth Antichriſt's ruin, and the progreſs of his judgment and down caſting in the various ſteps thereof, with a ſpecial reſemblance to the Lord's way with *Pharaoh*; of whom he appears to have been a type, ſuch judicial ſtrokes of induration on both, a gradual procedure by one plague after another, with the ſame effect and product, to give the church a new aſſault, on any favourable interval; until the great God make his power known as once he did at the *Red ſea*. For there we may ſay, did the Lord firſt found a national church, with a ſpecial type of the great works and deliverances he would do for her in after times, and by this repreſent that marvelous ſtroke he is to bring on Antichriſt. It is not ſtrange to ſee the truth brought down to the grave, yea, as if it were buried, when even this thing by the over-ruling providence of him, who maketh all things work together for her good, is turned to her advantage, and tends to her riſing with a greater luſtre and brightneſs; who could in an ordinary way judge, the reformed church, then upon an advance

in the *French* maſſacre, the catholick league there, and the *Low Country* perſecution by *Alva*, yet theſe were an antecedent preparation to her further riſe, which a little time made appear. 5. This further I ſhall add, as to the preſent time of the church, which from the ſcipture ſeems clear; that, that bleſſed much longed for, and glorious day of the ſecond coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt (which as the laſt period of the full accompliſhment of all that is written will once for all and for ever put a glorious cloſe to the church's warfare, the ſoldier's ſword and helmet ſhall then be laid aſide, and give place to the victor's harp and crown, never to be laid down again) haſteth apace, O let him who writeth and him who readeth ſay, even ſo come Lord Jeſus quickly. It is ſure that God who hath appointed man his time, and with whom the number of his months and years are, hath ſet time its glaſs alſo, and bounded the duration of this world, that it cannot continue one minute more, and though the particular time falls not under our inquiry, which the majeſty of God hath concealed from the angels; yet is this clear, there are ſings given of its near approach, which in their ſeaſon will be diſcernible, though little noticed by the world, it being in ſuch a lethargy, and men then ſo thronged with the cares of this life that theſe grave forewarnings will not rouſe them up; but it is evident ſuch ſigns are not given in vain, for therewith the church hath a call to diſcern wiſely what appearance there is of the approach of that day, yea, on ſuch an account to lift up their head with a ſolemn congratulation; O what a marvelous truth is this, the ſerious thoughts of which, might give men a new ſubject for wonder each day, that the time is haſtening, when the redeemer of the church ſhall appear in the clouds of heaven, in flaming fire with an innumerable company of the angels, and now the duſt of the ſaints hath not long to ſleep, until they be awaked with that unſpeakable ſweet and raviſhing ſound of the laſt trumpet: faithful is he who hath promiſed, yea, for further aſſurance, we have a ſolemn oath thereto, by him who lives for ever and ever; it is long ſince *John* gave this warning to the church, behold he cometh with clouds; and then did theſe primitive chriſtians ſolace themſelves on that ground; ſome few evidences of this day's approach, with a ſafe warrant from the ſcripture we may diſcern, *which, as the bloſſoming of the ſpring doth witneſs the ſummer, is now near.* 1. If the whole days of the goſpel ſince that glorious triumph of the mediator in his ſuffering for the church, and his reſurrection be upon the ſcriptures reckoning, the laſt times, we muſt then judge the night is far ſpent, and the day at hand. 2. If in the days of the ſeventh trumpet the myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed, is not this clear that two ages are almoſt paſt ſince it begun to blow, under which the intereſt of the goſpel hath a moſt remarkable advance. 3. If the laſt ſtroke and utter aboliſhing of Antichriſt, ſhall be by the brightneſs of Chriſt's ſecond coming, 2 *Theſ.* ii. 8. is there not ſolid ground thence to judge this bleſſed day haſteth when his falling is ſo far advanced, it is ſure we have ſeen his kingdom in a great meaſure darkned, his conſuming and mouldering down by the breath of Chriſt's mouth in the preached goſpel; and now wait in hope, for that more remarkable ſtep of his judgment, which the ſcripture, I think, gives as a near ſign of the coming of the Lord even ſuch as the white skie, and morning brightneſs, is to the watchman of the days being near; and thus as we ſee the ruin and downfal of the man of ſin advance, there ſeems to be a proportional ground of certainty, thence to conclude the near approach of the day of Chriſt's ſecond coming.

SECOND particular, which in our diſcerning the time calls for a ſerious enquiry is this, *What the preſent appearance and ſigns of the time ſeem to point at*, for theſe as the body, are of ſpecial uſe to give a clear diſcovery of its

temper

temper and disposition, but this is a prognostication that goeth above the stars and all the rules of astrology, which the scripture only can make us know: I confess this day they seem sad, and every where look with a threatning aspect on the church, we see not now our signs, and these tokens for good, which sometimes have appeared: but there are presages, if we could gravely look thereon, that might cause us with astonishment enquire, what can such things portend, and when will be the end of these wonders? Some few I shall briefly point at, which concern this time, that if we be not much asleep might be very rousing, and make us regard the same with an awful and humbling impression, for they truly threaten; yet I must say with a reference to the scripture, and upon an inquiry into that unerring record anent their meaning, first that we have a safe warrant from them to conclude that whatever may befal a particular church, yet nothing thence can be concluded as demonstrative of a mortal prejudice to the church universal; for though this or that particular church may be cut off and spew'd out of his mouth (as many have and most of the particular churches may this day mediate terror *if he spared not the natural branches take heed, lest he also spare not thee* should sound an alarm to each church, these very things with highly aggravating circumstances being too obvious and easy to be found with them for which he cast others off) yet he must encrease his kingdom, yea, when he seems to lose ground in one place of the world it is made up with advantage by the enlargement of the same in another place, and often out of the very ruins and dissipation of that church which he casts off, carries materials to build him an house elsewhere: in which case we are instead of a querulous saying, why is it thus? to adore and bless the glory of the Lord from his place, to justify his procedure and be glad that they to whom he was not spoken of shall see, and they who had not heard shall understand, secondly we may also say with the same warrant, that even a particular church which hath very death presaging symptoms, and scarce a token for good, can by him who healeth backslidings and loveth freely, be recovered, he can make dry bones to flourish as a green herb, for the issues from spiritual death belong to him, he can make them who had fallen from their first love repent and do the first works, whereby the departing of the glory and the removing of the candlestick out of his place shall be prevented. I am so much the more pressed to touch this a little, because the very few serious who are yet left or delivered from that spiritual sopor and stupidity which hath seized on others, while they lay to heart the things which concern the kingdom of Jesus Christ, are upon the frightful aspect of affairs and on the consideration of what they observe in the temper of men and tendency of things, ready to cast away all confidence, and abandon themselves to a simple despondency, they almost question, whether they ought to entertain any hope that we shall any more be called by that blessed name *Jehovah Shammah The Lord is there*, seeing nothing appears at present in the disposition of men, or dispensation of God which doth not seem to portend a final departure. Notwithstanding whereof I would desire such to beware lest in their heartlessness they limit the holy one of *Israel*, and circumscribe the soveraignty of grace within its just latitude and limits, so for their establishment against such a despondency, and for their excitement to a serious wrestling with him in order to his abode with us to consider these particulars.

First, We may call this one of the signs and presages of the time, *That the devil is now so much aloft, and in a strange way bestirring himself against the church, to beget every where a prejudice at the truth, which this day by*

very remarkable effects of his power, may be seen: 1. It is sure he is a bad neighbour, yet we must say he endangers the church most, when, because he makes no great noise, he his least discerned; his being apparently quiet and still hath been found in experience more fatal to the flourishing and real success of the gospel than his rage, and in his simulat flight more prevalent than in his more furious assaults, but we have the scripture to ask concerning this, which makes these clear. 1. That his appearing with great wrath shews his time to be short, and that it will be no continued or lying storm, *Rev.* xii. 12. 2. We thence know, his being let loose with a more than usual liberty to trouble the church, is previous to some great and remarkable restraint; which you may read, *Rev.* xx. 7, 8. where he is in a more special way let loose, but we find, v. 10. his being chained up for ever follows. 3. We may clearly see from the scripture the devil much aloft, with a more remarkable stir and noise, when some great thing from the Lord is to be brought forth for the church. When the set time, that solemn and blessed time was now come of compleating by that one sacrifice for ever the work of redemption, so that this hour and power of darkness did introduce an everlasting sunshine upon the church, and Satan by pursuing the prince of life unto the death had a most fatal overthrow, for by death he overcame him who had the power of death that is the devil, and by being lifted up upon the cross he spoiled principalities and powers triumphing openly over them, and thus dying sung the victory and said, it is finished, whereby a victory over all enemies is eternally ensured to the saints: yea, is it not clear, what an hot alarm the church may expect from him, upon the approach of that great victory and the decision of the last battle betwixt *Michael* and the *Dragon*, see *Rev.* xx. 9. 10. what an appearance he will then have, and in what a manner will he bestir himself. 2. Is not this a present sign of the time, about which we may with some astonishment enquire what it doth mean, and if it hath any favourable aspect on the churches, that we see almost every where the most unite and formidable assault of the adversaries of the truth, and its special aim at the kingly power and supremacy of the Mediator, as head over his church; at which great truth the opposition of this time seems most directly to be levelled, yea, we may say, the crown of Christ which becomes him alone to wear, and this piece of his glory is now betwixt antichrist, and the princes of the earth divided, each contending for his share: Sure this is too discernible, and at present the adversary seems to prevail, even to a bearing down and bringing under of that great interest of our blessed master; but it is as sure there is no ground to fear this, being well understood, which is a most hopeful and promising sign to the church; for we must thus reason from the scripture, if Christ must reign until all his enemies be brought in subjection, it is then sure the greater the opposition and assault be, the victory must be the greater; and if that be not only prayed for, but a clear prophesy, *That Jesus Christ will take unto himself his great power and reign.* Must we not then expect he will take it, yea, in a more eminent and conspicuous manner, when men are seeking in the height of their rebellion and rage against the Lord and his anointed to seise on his scepter and snatch it from him, and if this also be sure, and in the volumn of that record of the scripture written concerning him, that his crown must flourish on his own head, shall not then his enemies be cloathed with shame? Yea, hath not this truth a dreadful aspect on the crown and scepters of many princes who would rob the Mediator of his? 3. Is it not a strange presage and sign of the time, that we now see most hopeful and promising appearances for the church's good, remarkably blasted, things which in an ordinary way look to be grounds of

of encouragement made to fail, we see human props almost every where removed or broken, the truth deserted by great men, yea, the families of such falling off this day from the Lord, whose ancestors for a long time had been zealous for his interest: I confess this is a threatning appearance, by which many now seem to be shaken, but I would humbly reason on scripture grounds, that it is no bad sign, but hath therewith some comfortable aspect on the church; it being clear. 1. That such a connexion is no strange thing in the Bible, betwixt an extreme exigence of the church's case, and the Lord's eminent appearing for her out-gate, see *Isaiah* xxx. 18. and lxiii. 5. li. 20. 21, 22. Yea, I must say, it is hard to find any great mercy, and remarkable deliverance of the church, but hath at some such back-set trysted her, 2. Is not such a disadvantage and forsaken case expressly held forth as one of graces opportunities of doing good to his people; read *Jer.* xxx. 14, 15. &c. and you will see it; that when none is to plead her cause, no healer, and *Zion* called an outcast which no man seeketh after; thence does the Lord allow his people to be incouraged, and to take it as a ground of hope, he will by his own immediate hand appear. 3. Is it not from the word clear, that a people at such a disadvantage, and under most visible weakness when in God's way, may be then made use of, for greatest service; they were in as sore distress of whom *Hebr.* xi. 34. it is written, out of weakness were made strong, *&c.* I shall further add, can there be cause from the withdrawing of human help, and probable means of safety to fear the church's ruin, when it falls under his hand, who by things most destructive can serve his interest, and bring salvation at such a time: when none but God could save, and why are these wonderful providences, that so oft have met the church in a forsaken case, written before us in the scriptures, is it not for after times to witness to the posterity how the church may be cast down, but not destroyed, and though she fall she cannot lie still, but must arise *Hosea*, vi. 1, 2, 3. nor have her adversaries any cause of triumph thence, *Mic.* vii. 8, 9. 10. 4. As to the present appearance of the time, is not this a threatning sign, which hath a very dreadful aspect on the church; even that discernible loss and disadvantage, the best now seem to be at in their frame, and that under a growing trial of the church, and the great distemper many of these appear to be in, whilst we may see much of that holy fear and tenderness, that did formerly shew it self amongst the godly gone, corruption aloft, prejudice easily taken, a spirit of jealousy poured out, yea, very strange and unusual out breakings in offence and scandal, and oh, is there not here cause of fear, that the righteous God be on a further departure from his people, and that his judgment shall yet more hotly pursue such, until he have consumed this generation? On which account if he should make us a generation of his wrath, we are called, to adore and justify the unspotted way of the Lord; yet even as to this, I must adventure with respect to soveraignity of grace (which is only like it self, and infinitely above our thoughts) to offer some discovery from the scripture of what he hath done in like cases: how marvelously hath the gracious and long suffering God interposed, and at such a sore back-set helped his church? For it is clear, 1. That when the church hath had no argument to make use of, no confidence to plead, but broken and confounded, under the sense of horrid guilt, he finds one in himself, *Isaiah* xlviii. 9. *For my names sake will I defer my anger*, &c. 2. We find the covenant made use of by the Lord, to assist a judicial procedure against his people, *Psal.* cvi. 44. *Nevertheless he regarded their affliction when he heard their cry and remembred for them his covenant.* 3. We find the rage and violence of the adversary, and their taking advantage to blaspheme, made use of as an argument

gument by him, to own his people, who had otherwiſe forfaulted all the former grounds of confidence, *Deut.* xxxii. 26. 4. We may read how ſoveraign grace, hath thus marvelouſly ſtepped in, when the rod did not humble, and ſmiting would not do the turn: *I ſmote them, and they went on frowardly in the way of their heart, Iſa.* lvii. 17. Yet, ſays the Lord, I will not thus quit them, there is one cure for all, *I have ſeen their ways, and will heal them*; ſuch a diſcovery alſo have we thereof, when a peoples ruin is of themſelves, and iniquity hath brought them low, *Hoſ.* xiii. 9. *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf, but in me is thy help*: yea, hath not grace reſcued theſe on whom their mercy muſt be forced, and while on a hot chaſe in departing from God, *Hoſ.* ii. 7. 9, 5. have we not this choice diſcovery of the Lord's way with his people held forth in the ſcirpture, that whilſt he works for them, *He will work theſe in them alſo, Iſa.* xxvi. 12. I ſhall add, thus hath the freedom of grace, O marvelous grace! ſhined forth in former ages of the church, but they ſadly miſtake its meaning, who are thus made ſecure and not thereby led unto repentance. 5. This looks like one of the ſigns of our time, that there is a great wearing out of the godly, yea, the choice thereof, even by a more than uſual diſpatch; and is not this a ſad ſcripture preſage of evil coming, when ſuch are (as it were) haſtened away that they may be hid in the grave, from a further ſtorm? Yet theſe things ſeem clear alſo. 1. Conſider what a remarkable conſumption did almoſt wear out the church in the wilderneſs, whilſt even then there was a haſtening of her after enlargement; and though a ſore judgment, yea, the church's mercy in a greater upmaking of that loſs was helped forward; yea, we find *Moſes* and *Aaron* with many of theſe, who had been moſt eminent inſtruments in *Iſraels* coming forth out of *Egypt*, taken away on a near approach of their entry into *Canaan*. 2. It is ſure ſome of the greateſt promiſes of the ſcripture wait on the church when brought to a very ſmall remnant, *Ezek.* vi. 8, 9. *Iſa.* xxxvii. 31. 3. Hath not the Lord ſaid in ſuch a caſe, *The conſumption determined ſhall overflow with righteouſneſs? Iſa.* x. 20. That the next tide can bring in as many with a marvelous increaſe, as theſe former conſuming ſtrokes had taken away; yea, is it not ſeen with a wearing out of the godly, and a declining of religion, in one part of the world or of a country where many have been called, that it doth break up remarkably in another, and thus the goſpel recovers that intereſt, which it ſeemed to have loſt. 6. Does not the preſent appearance of the time, threaten by very unuſual ſigns and preſages, ſome ſharp ſtorm to come now upon the world, which in many inſtances we may diſcern, that there is ſome remarkable work of judgment to be brought forth, and a great break amongſt the nations near, (though the earth ſeems this day in a ſtrange meaſure quiet, yea, ſo extraordinary a calm now through the world, may it not be a preſage of ſome great ſtorm which as too clear and hot a blink, foretels a break of the weather) ſure it is there is a ſound of great wrath and judgment in the ears of many who know what it is to diſcern the times, it is well the ſcripture is near, a prognoſtication that can anſwer all the ages of the church, and it is there we ſhould enquire, what ſuch a ſign does portend, we may not wiſh the evil day, but on ſuch an appearance of the time, that awful impreſſion *Hab.* iii. 16. is called for, to be in a trembling frame, when God threatens and does thus utter his voice; yet is it clear that from theſe threatning ſigns, there is a comfortable ſound of much good to the church, for, 1. We find days of vengeance on the world, held forth as neceſſary for the accompliſhing of the ſcripture, *Luk* xxi. 22. and made ſubſervient to the bringing forth ſome ſpecial truth thereof unto a performance. 2. We find in times of greateſt judgment, the church's intereſt

intereſt then ſet a-part, and ſecured, with a large warrant to the godly, not to fear; even whilſt his garments are dyed with blood; *Iſa.* lxiii. 1. *Ezek.* ix. 4. *Rev.* iii. 10. 3. may we not ſee the church's enlargement, and ſome of her greateſt mercies thus uſhered in, which is clear, *Iſa.* lxiii. 4. *Zeph.* xxxviii. and O what a ſtrange connection is there? That the putting the earth in a flame, and over-turning the nations, when the Lord, as a lion does rouſe himſelf up to the prey, ſhould be the very riſe to an accompliſhing of ſome great promiſes for the church's advantage, yea, and as a preludium to the ſame: yet nothing more evident to ſuch who underſtand the ſcripture, and by ſuch a ſign does the Lord ſpeak comfortably to his people, we find a dreadful winter ſtorm on the world, pointed out as a ſpring time to the church, and the trees putting forth their bloſſom, as *Luke* xxi. 25. it is clear her deliverance may be begun, and the ſtorm then breaking, which may for a time put the church under greater difficulties then before, yea cauſe the godly miſtake, and tremble at the ſight of their mercy, becauſe of theſe things by which it is uſhered in even when it is before their eyes. I ſhall add no more but this, it is our great concernment, to fear him who guides all theſe things, to whom alone the determination of events doth belong; and this is the wiſdom of his people, not to faint at the ſtrange appearance of the time or the ſigns thereof, but to know what is called for, and thence read perſonal duties, from the ſad preſages of publick judgment, and to purſue more nearneſs with God, and enſure a retreat under his ſhadow until the indignation paſs over, *for behold the Lord cometh out of his place to viſit the inhabitants of the earth, and the earth ſhall diſcloſe her blood, and no more cover her ſlain,* Iſa. xxvi. 21.

A third particular which concerns the godly with much circumſpection to notice and underſtand, in their diſcerning the time is, *The peculiar ſnares and hazards thereof,* this is the ſcripture character of the wiſe man, to diſcern time and judgment, it being ſo oft verified, *Eccleſ.* ix. 12. that in an evil time, the children of men are enſnared, when it falls ſuddenly upon them; ſure it is there are ſearching times, when the chriſtian's way is more difficult, and narrow (though each day hath its ſnares, which in a ſpecial way waits thereon) and then is it the wiſdom of the prudent to underſtand his way, and know his ground, which the adverſary by ſubtil and indiſcernible approaches, will ſeek to draw him off; then is a quick, ſagacious diſcerning in the fear of the Lord called for, to have their eyes in their head, and be in a watching poſture, when the net is cloſely ſpread under their feet: it is a ſad remark, too clearly verified oft-times on a people profeſſing the truth, which is ſaid of *Ephraim,* ſtrangers have devoured their ſtrength, and they knew it not, yea their not diſcerning of the ſame, proves a ſpecial cauſe of their further ruin; and is it not written for the ages to come, in what a ſecure and ſleeping poſture *Samſon* had his hair cut, he firſt loſt his diſcerning of ſuch a ſnare, e'er he loſt his eyes: we find *David* through many of the *Pſalms* in his wreſtlings with God, more ſolicitous for the preventing the ſnares of wicked men, and a delivery thence, than from their rage and violence: there is a groaping the pulſe of the times by which the preſent diſtemper and hazard of the church may be known, as well as of the body of man; and I muſt ſay, this day in a ſpecial manner calls us to this grave ſtudy. I intend no further application, but a very ſhort touch at ſome things in general, which rightly purſued in the godly man's ſerious ſtudy may help to diſcern ſomething of the publick ſnares of the time, and how they get advantage in their approach, for theſe cloſely wait their ſeaſon, for in vain is the net ſpread in the ſight of the bird.

1. It is clear each time hath its peculiar diſtemper and evils, that have then a ſpecial power and prevalency therewith, the obſerving of which concerns

the godly for their more watchful adverting to the ſnares of that time, for then the temptation of the time goes therewith, as the preſent diſtemper diſcovers it ſelf, whether in a hot boiling fever, or in a dead lethargy, and follows theſe evils, which are in that time moſt contagious, where the current of the multitude runs, which is giving the godly the greateſt aſſault, and ſeem to be warmed under the favourable aſpect, and countenance of great men; yea theſe evils, which promiſe ſome outward advantage, and ſecurity from trouble, when the queſtion is ſtated betwixt ſin and ſuffering, it is there the preſent ſnare does haunt, and there lyes a ſpecial piece of the godly man's work, to hold off and keep a diſtance from the leaſt acceſſion thereto; yea I may ſay next to the ſalvation of their ſoul, to be ſolicitous all alongſt their way, to have their garments keept from the ſmalleſt ſtain and ſpot thereof; a touch a ſmall defilement from a publick prevailing evil, being found to draw more deep on the conſcience, and with more difficulty do men recover, and eſcape thence, than from many other perſonal infirmities. 2. It is alſo clear there is ſome piece of the truth of God in each time of the church that is more queſtioned and brought in debate, by which with greater advantage and clearneſs we may know where a publick ſnare doth lye; for here is its aim directed, to entangle and aſſault the godly man, where in a ſpecial way he is called to his poſt, to contend for ſuch an intereſt; and thus it may be ſaid, if one keep ſight well of preſent duty, he will with more facility find out the ſcent on which the ſnare of the time is, how it directs its motion to darken or caſt an obſtruction in the way of that duty. 3. We may thus diſcern a prevailing ſnare, and its getting ground, by that tendency there is in a day of trial, to queſtion and make inquiry anent duties which were once clear and unqueſtionable, when their judgment was not byaſſed from any outward incitements, for this ſpeaks mens finding a ſad invention, to be rid of their conſcience, by extenuating preſent controverſies, a deſign which (in the righteous judgment of the Lord) is ſeldom ſet on foot by any, but they too viſibly thrive therein, for their further ruin, and get an anſwer according to the idol of their heart, thus *Balaam* we have in divine record, as a dreadful inſtance, who tried that way, and therein was ſucceſsful, and it is now a known remark, that an heſitation, and faint upon the heart from want of reſolution to ſuffer for the truth, will not long want a ſcruple in the head to cauſe a debate there-anent and then is it eaſy for a ſnare to enter, O with what fear and tenderneſs ſhould light be regarded, which as the apple of the eye, may by the leaſt thing be hurt, but is not eaſily healed: thus is it, men do inſenſibly wear out from under theſe former impreſſions they had upon them of duty, and e'er they are aware have their judgment by a judicial ſtroke, determined in that, which was before their deſire; they know little, that depth of a man's heart, who are not jealous over a change on their judgment in an hour of trial when its tendency is, to ſpare themſelves. 4. We may diſcern a publick ſnare in its approach, by that advantage the adverſary gets thereby to divide the godly and theſe who appear for the truth amongſt themſelves, for then it is eaſy to enter by ſuch a breach, and throw in the bait in ſo muddy a water, it being too obvious what an advantage a ſnare hath, where jealouſy with theſe bitter effects of private ſtrife and quarreling turns mens eyes off the publick hazard, and blunts that edge of contending for the truth, in ſmiting one upon another, I do not mean but there may be a neceſſity oft on the godly to withſtand their friends to their face, yea the eminenteſt in the church, were it a *Peter*, *Gal.* ii. 11. when the truth is concerned, but this ſhould be with the greateſt caution and tenderneſs to obviate a breach, which is like the breaking in of waters, whilſt the watching adverſary waits his advantage in ſuch

ſuch a day of their halting, and it is too ſadly known, how ſmall a wedge, that is driven with a tendency to that end, makes way for the entry of a further ſnare, ſee 1 *Cor.* xi. 16. what a ſad connection there is betwixt a dividing time of the church, and a further departing from the truth, but we muſt always take heed that we ſo purſue union amongſt our ſelves as that Chriſt and his cauſe be not left alone. 5. A preſent ſnare may be ſeen by the ſudden change of known adverſaries, and the friendly inſinuations of theſe who were wont to threaten, that in ſuch an appearance there lyes an ambuſh, and is but a change of weapons for a ſeen advantage, ſure this ſhould be ground of fear, and a cautious advertence to be much alone with God, that men may know the voice of the ſhepherd, leſt they follow after a ſtranger, it being more uſual, to be ſtolen off their feet in a calm, than blown down by a ſtorm; it is hard to ſtand before the blandiſhments of men, where that more endearing, and ſweet reliſh of peace with God is not keeped on the ſoul, which is a choice mean to make the ear deaf to the moſt charming voice of the enchanter: oft hath it been that adder's poiſon is under their lips, whilſt wrath is broiling in their heart, *Pſal.* cxl. yea that the cruel man can change his countenance, when it is fit to lay a ſnare, and with *Joab* embrace them in their arms whom they intend to ſmite under the fifth rib. 6. May not thus a ſnare be ſeen in its approach; by that prevalence the fear of man hath over the time, and that unuſual command, it ſeems to have ſometimes over the ſpirits of men, over theſe whoſe former zeal and reſolution for the truth, hath in other trials with much advantage appeared; here is indeed cauſe to watch, for in the fear of man there is a ſnare, *Prov.* xxix. 25. which then will take advantage to purſue, when it finds men in a flying poſture, and ſhrunk ſo far below their former appearance: we find the godly man hath his breaſt plate, but he hath no piece of armour for his back, when he turns his face from reſiſting: it's ſad when the adverſary is taught to follow, by our fainting, and that ſpirit which is in the world ſeems to be upon the aſcendent, with a prevalence even over the ſpirits of the godly; yea theſe debaſed, and made contemptible in their eyes, in whom the appearance of God, and his authority upon them, at another time, would have made the hearts of their enemies to have trembled; this is too obvious in an humbling and judicial time of the church, until once that hour of her trial go over. 7. A publick ſnare is then to be feared, and calls for a watching eye, by that ſucceſs which waits on a ſinful courſe, eſpecially when ſuch a ſhine is of any continuance, for then new queries will be ſtarted, ſtrange reports ſpread, with much ſubtil reflection on way the way of the Lord, to make the godly queſtion the ſame: *David* found it not eaſy to ſtand before this, which put him to bring under debate his principles, and the advantage of his cauſe, *Pſal.* lxxiii. 13, and in ſuch a trial doth the adverſary by ſome continued obſervation, know how to aſſault the followers of the truth, and attack them at their weakeſt, then is it the ſcandal of the croſs cauſeth many offend, for it is ſore for ſuch to ſuffer, who know not the fellowſhip of the croſs of Chriſt, which is a piece of the greateſt and moſt near fellowſhip with him upon the earth; yea then the church may run more hazard from ſome of her friends, than the profeſſed adverſary, for thus oft is a prevailing ſnare helped forward; it cannot but be a ſearching and hazardous time, when many are turning aſide, and ſome of underſtanding ſuffered to fall, who are ready to preſs their ſin as duty on others, for ſeldom do ſuch fall off, but are found more ſtirring and active in ſuch a way to engage others, then they were, while holding their former integrity to purſue the truth's intereſt; thus we have ſeen it, ſo it is, let us hear it and know it for our good. 8. Thus a ſnare of the time may be diſcern-

ed,

ed, by the tendency thereof to corruption in the church, and a producing ſtill the ſame effects, whatever be pretended, when by the hands of *Eſau*, it diſcovers it ſelf, though it have the voice of *Jacob:* And doth not the ruin of many who have daſhed on ſuch a rock, and have been thus taken, put a ſad mark thereon; for it may be ſaid no ſnare or ſubtil contrivance of the adverſary, waits the godly in the preſent time, but if men do not conſent to ſhut their eyes, they may from the ſcripture, and obſervation of the church, ſee at others coſt, ſome diſcernable beacon ſet thereon, what a tendency ſuch a thing hath ſtill had, to a making ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience, how hard it is to dance about the fire and not be burned, or ſtand in the way and counſels of ungodly men, and not be enſnared. 9. It ſeems to threaten a ſnare, when enquiry about the duty of the time is purſued without reſpect to the preſent caſe, and circumſtances thereof; for thus a ſnare may wait in a thing at other times indifferent, the neglect whereof upon ſome ſpecial circumſtances, may be a quitting their duty; and the doing alſo, or yielding to ſomething in another caſe warrantable, at ſome times may fall under a moral prohibition; as this, when a thing in it ſelf indifferent, *Circa ſacra & cultum Dei*, is preſſed by the magiſtrate, as neceſſary by virtue of his ſole command and to be the ſubjecting the godly in things, wherein they are not ſubject, and to the prejudice of another juriſdiction: can there be an enquiry anent this in the general, without a particular application to the complex caſe, it may be ſaid a ſnare is then on the entry, when that conſideration of the prophet is not much regarded in the preſent queſtion, *is this a time for ſuch a thing*; for the diſciples to refreſh themſelves with ſleep, was a piece of innocent duty; but that they could not watch this one hour with their maſter in his ſufferings, muſt needs vary the caſe, for it was in ſo far a deſerting him. 10. I ſhall further add, is not this a ſad appearance of ſome publick ſnare getting advantage which is witneſſed by a previous diſpoſition, and that prevalence private engagements to an outward intereſt hath upon mens ſpirits, for a ſnare enters not without a call, and finds within, its greateſt ſtrength and advantage; with an unſenſible wearing out of ſoul tenderneſs, is too oft known, to have a tendency for conforming to an evil courſe, for the motion is then down the hill, and there is cauſe to fear the ſnare will follow in there, and lye about that intereſt, which otherwiſe hath got the maſtery over them: how many in embracing the world, have at the next ſtep fallen off from the truth? No weapon hath been more made uſe of againſt the church, and hath ruined moe, ſo that it may be ſaid, where other ſnares have killed their thouſands this its ten thouſands; I muſt ſay, ſuch an appearance in a time of the church's trial, is like the breaking forth of her gray hairs, nor is it eaſy for theſe to ſtand, or reſiſt, who are ſo far gone backward, or keep their feet before a ſnare, where the truth ceaſeth to get a command over their heart.

A fourth particular, which calls for a ſerious inquiry, from theſe who know time, and are wiſe to diſcern the ſame, is this, *What can the righteous do*, when there is a growing darkneſs on the church, and the very foundations like to be ſhaken, yea the hearts of many ſo far down that they are like to loſe their hand therewith, in the matter of duty, and give over, as men aſtoniſhed, ſeeing this evil is from the Lord: It is no ſmall thing, to manage well ſuch a time of the church's trial, and in ſo ſharp a ſtorm, there is need of much balaſt: but we know the ſcripture of God is near, which ſtands good for his peoples conduct, to let them know how to ſteer their courſe in the darkeſt night, and from that bleſſed record, there is one thing clearly held forth to anſwer ſuch a time, which is a great duty; *let the righteous hold on his*

his way, and he who hath clean hands wax ſtronger, and ſtronger; *Job* xvii. 9. For it is ſure they have cauſe and ſolid ground for this, though the earth ſhould in a more ſtrange manner reel, and the pillars thereof ſeem to be diſſolved, ſince it is certain and true.

1. That all is well, and nothing can fall wrong, whilſt the foundation of God, which is his eternal council held forth in the ſcripture, abides ſure; though other foundations be ſhaken, the godly man does then lye at a ſafe anchor, which will not drive in a ſtormy day, his great intereſt is beyond hazard, though more than an immortal ſoul were in that adventure, his heaven is ſure, whereof he cannot be beguiled, whilſt things upon the earth ſeem moſt uncertain; and muſt it not then be well with the church, were it even ſinking into the grave, ſince the Mediator will bring it up again; mens evil eye cannot hurt, nor their curſing blaſt that intereſt which God hath bleſſed, for it is then ſure, there is no enchantment againſt *Jacob*, or divination againſt *Iſrael*. 2. Is not the truth, and that great intereſt of godlineſs, that, to a chriſtian, and in ſuch a manner known to him, that it needs no teſtimony from men or incitement from the example of others, for to theſe it commends it ſelf, and does witneſs its reality, though by all the generation amongſt whom they live it ſhould be cryed down; it's ſure to be a chriſtian indeed, requires this, to know the truth and be founded on ſuch a ground that can ſupport and quiet the ſoul, in the greateſt falling off of others, though none elſe were to walk in that way, that if it were ſuppoſed, one ſerious chriſtian in ſuch an age, were in the whole world, and thus left alone, there is ſo great a diſcovery and certainty of the truth to be known upon the ſoul, as ſhould oblige him; to ſuch a declaration with *Joſhua*, *But as for me I will ſerve the Lord.* O to ſee a generation of men of ſuch metal, who with a reſolute peremptorineſs would forſake all men and follow the Lord, and ſerve him without company, if better might not be, we might by the hand of ſuch expect to be led through *Jordan*, after our *Moſeſes* are dead by whom we were led thorough the *Red-Sea*, but alaſs where are they! 3. Have not theſe ground in the darkeſt time, to be confirmed, who may ſee cauſe to improve the moſt ſhaking things, which fall out in their day, for their further eſtabliſhment, and ſtrengthen their hand in the way of the Lord, by theſe diſpenſations at which many ſtumble: It is ſtrange to obſerve what a challenge and upcaſt ſome have in their reflecting on the truth, on theſe grounds which in their conſcience, they muſt admit to be a convincing witneſs thereto; but having at ſome length elſewhere touched this, I ſhall but add theſe few things more, which as evident grounds of eſtabliſhment, in the way of the Lord, and for our further ſtrengthning therein ſhould be improved; which yet are an uſual challenge by many againſt the ſame.

FIRST, That the number ſeems ſo ſmall who follow the truth, and are found ſerious in the ſtudy of godlineſs, can be no ground to queſtion this, without a ſtrange miſtake; ſince men muſt either quit the ſcripture, or admit, the way to life is ſtrait, and few enter therein: yea that the ſmall convoy the truth hath in the world is an expreſs verification of it: Is there the leaſt warrant to make the ſuffrage of the multitude a teſt of the way of the Lord, but it is ſure we can ſhew them the contrary, that his followers are a ſelect number choſen out of the world, the great bulk whereof is outlawed, and put out of the interceſſion of the Mediator, elſe the ſcripture could not be fulfilled, and is not the falling of many from the truth a great ſeal thereto, no leſs than the coming of others, and that excellent way of holineſs, the more diſcernibly known by ſuch a character, that it is every where ſpoken againſt. 2. That ſo great contempt and reproach does this day attend the truth and practice of

godlineſs, ſhould prejudge none thereat, but be a further ground of ſtrengthning, to help the chriſtian to hold on his way, ſince it is nothing elſe but what is foretold, and what the moſt excellent of the earth in their time have met with to be accompted the filth and of-ſcouring of the world; in no age hath the truth wanted ſuch an aſſault, and in no age hath it wanted a triumph over the ſame: Yea hath not the greateſt reproacher ſometime been forced to give in his retractation, and make earneſt of that, which before he ſcoffed at? when God comes near by a ſtroke of his judgment, then do the proud change their ſtile and ſpeak in another language upon the awful appearance of death, but this alſo doth witneſs, what a marvelous thing religion is, which with theſe who know it, loſeth no weight, when under the greateſt cloud of detraction, and contempt: for then is Chriſt ſtill precious and his way deſireable, unto theſe who believe. 3. That ſentence is not ſpeedily execute againſt an evil courſe, we ſee what improvement the world makes thereof, to be more deſperately wicked; but is not this alſo a ſeal and confirmation of the truth, and a ground for eſtabliſhment in the way of the Lord, which verifies the ſcripture, *Eccleſ.* viii. 11. And it is there men may ſee a ſhort reprieval from puniſhment is no pardon, or acquittance, whilſt ſin runs on to an after account; that judgment deferred when therewith a further hardening appears, doth threaten more than a quick and preſent diſpatch, and ſhowes the ſtroke will be the greater when it comes, ſurely if this fell not out, whereof the world takes ſuch advantage, it might in ſo far put us to queſtion the truth, of which one ſyllable muſt not fall to the ground. 4. So great an abounding of prophanity and ungodlineſs within the church, is it not an undeniable ſeal to the verity of the ſcripture, which thus takes place, and ſhould help the godly man to hold on his way, it being unanſwerably clear, there could be no darkneſs if there were not ſuch a thing as light, or folly if there were no wiſdom, and is not excellent holineſs thus evidently made known in its oppoſite, to which there could be no contrariety, if itſelf were not moſt real. 5. That the truth ſeems ſo much entangled in a confuſion of contrary doctrines, and we ſee without ceaſing, purſued by error, and the aſſault of theſe adverſaries who in every age are ſeeking to darken the ſame, can be no ground of prejudice and ſhaking, without a ſtrange miſtake, but ſhould ſtrengthen the godly in their way, and help them to wax ſtronger, who have the ſcripture thus ſo expreſly fulfilled before their eyes; it is ſure the Lord hath made his way plain, nor does that bleſſed record give any ground to turn aſide unto crooked paths; for theſe are clouds of mens own creating, which have ſuch tendency to darken the ſame; but we ſee truth in all ages waited on by error, which with any brighter diſcovery thereof, breaks up like a thick fogg; though theſe can never unite, no more than gold and clay can joyn together; and it is clear, the notion of error were unconceivable, if the truth had not a certainty and real being, nor doth it conflict with ſuch an adverſary, but for its further triumph; oh if the ſolid perſwaſion of the ſcripture, were in earneſt purſued, and mens ſoul once brought under the power and authority of the truth, as that, which is the word and teſtimony of the living God, it would prove a more effectual cure to ſo dreadful a diſtemper of the church than all the diſputes of the time, (which are of ſpecial uſe alſo) may not atheiſm be found upon a ſerious inquiry, the great riſe of error, and of mens bold adventuring to make the ſcripture of God a ſport of their invention, to make it ſubſervient to their intereſt, and run after ſuch a byaſs, and ſhould it not be for a lamentation, that a humble ſerious inquiry after the truth, under an awful impreſſion of that God whoſe word it is, is this day ſo rare a thing in the world: now this being ſo ſharp a trial of the church, and one of theſe things whereat many pretend to be moſt ſhaken,

though I have in another part touched it a little, I would add further ſome few remarks, how clear and expreſs a confirmation of the word even this is, which ſhould more fix and eſtabliſh theſe who love the truth, 1. It is manifeſt, that no error, or corrupt doctrine aſſaults the church, but is in ſuch a manner pointed forth, yea by ſo expreſs an oppoſition thereto, in the ſcripture, that we may ſee a prophetical fore-warning thereof, and of mens endeavour to corrupt and darken ſuch a piece of the truth; it is ſure the word is written and in a ſpecial way directed to every time of the church, and to all her after trials, and aſſaults, is peculiarly ſuited, by him who knew and did foreſee what oppoſition his truth in after ages ſhould meet with, and in his marvelous record, men may clearly ſee (if there were ſuch a ſerious inquiry) that there is no poiſon or corruption in doctrine which infeſts the church, but hath its proper antidote there provided. I muſt here, as to one particular inſtance, ſay, if I were not perſuaded of a determined ſpecies of government for the church under the *New Teſtament* (which is clear in the ſcripture, holding forth its conſtitution to be ariſtocratick, with a parity amongſt the officers of Jeſus Chriſt in the adminiſtration of their power, and a ſubordination of the leſſer parts to the greater) I could not ſhun ſo clear a remark, of that expreſs prohibition, of any diſparity and lordly prelacy in his houſe, yea how manifeſtly the all ſeeing God, when he was about to found the chriſtian church doth point in ſuch plain terms at this, that we may there read a very direct prediction of that ruin and prejudice it would on this accompt ſuſtain in after-times; I ſpeak this on no particular intereſt, or from bitterneſs and prejudice at the perſons of any, but have confidence to ſay, it is from the awe and perſwaſion of the truth: ſure on politick grounds, and with reſpect to an outward intereſt, it is eaſy to judge, that way wants not a perſwading bait, if ſomething greater were not to preponderate, and a deſtroying hook did not wait thereon, which ſhould make the purchaſe too dear, at the rate of denying Jeſus Chriſt in a piece of his truth, when a confeſſion thereof is called for before men. 2. Do we not ſee even in theſe things, which in that marvelous depth of error and deluſion on mens ſoul ſeems moſt ſtrange, the ſcripture thence moſt exactly confirmed, and in that power and energy which attends it, and is to many matter of aſtoniſhment, may diſcern how the clouds are carried about with a tempeſt, 2 *Pet.* ii. 17. and driven on by a judicial ſtroke, and though it is amazing to ſee at what a rate many are this way turned mad, with a diſcernible bewitching of their judgment, and a beſotting into moſt ſtrange and abſurd extravagancies, yea how tenacious and violent in their way, when ſilenced with the cleareſt diſcoveries of the truth, yet is not this alſo witneſſed, there is a righteous God giving up to ſtrong deluſion, in which Satan is let looſe with a remarkable power to deceive, 2 *Theſ.* ii. 12. O how dreadful is that ſtroke which is inflicted on the judgment and reaſon, which in ſome reſpect we may ſay is greater than that which is on the affections. 3. Find we not the ſcripture by a prophetical diſcovery, point at that influence human authority, and the patrociny of ſuch, who have a name and repute in the church, ſhould have on the corrupting the doctrine thereof; and therefore does the Holy Ghoſt ſo particularly guard againſt the ſame, and oppoſe the authority of the written word to the pretences of any party; that here an apoſtle muſt not be admitted or have credit to the truth's prejudice, not an angel, yea not a voice from heaven, may oppoſe it ſelf to this more ſure teſtimony of his word. 4. Is it not here even in that great depth of error we ſee this truth take place, deceiving and being deceived, how ſtrangely theſe meet, and by a marvelous ſtroke, mens judgment made captive to their will, and their deliberate acting to deceive others have the ſame effect on themſelves. 5. Thus alſo is the ſcripture made

out,

out, where we ſee how hard it is for men to fix in ſuch a way, or find land when they are once carried off the truth, and do lanch out in that horrid gulf of error, but ſeducers wax worſe and worſe.

Inference V. *The truth of God revealed in the ſcripture is in its import not more marvelous and great, than we may ſay is clear and obvious in the evidence of its verification, which hath every where ſuch a witneſs, that there can be no eſcape from this diſcovery, but if men will not receive its teſtimony, they muſt have it forced on them as their torment*; for it is here invention doth fail, and politicks are found too weak to ward off ſome impreſſion of that, which with an awful appearance and authority, does juſtify it ſelf to the conſcience without their conſent, nor can this ſecure them from that laſh of inward terror, which will make theſe tremble alone, when they ſeem to have confidence before others, but this advantage hath the truth of her adverſaries, that even atheiſm muſt bear a witneſs thereto, and againſt it ſelf, which if men would but weigh in the ballance of ſober reaſon, it ſhould appear a ſufficient antidote againſt its own poiſon, and a great ſeal to the ſcripture, which would want a ſpecial confirmation, if it wanted ſuch an adverſary, now to clear it a little more, and thus ſhut up what hath been on this ſubject held forth, I muſt in behalf of the glorious truth of God (which in all ages of the church did never want ſome diſcovery of its accompliſhment) atteſt the reproachers of this time who are ſo much at work to challenge his unſpotted way, and call in queſtion his faithfulneſs, to the weakning of the aſſent of many thereto, and do appeal them to that tribunal which the great God hath placed in the conſcience, if they without doing violence thereto, and putting forth the eye of reaſon, withſtand the clear evidences of divine truth, and the certainty of its performance, anent which, theſe few I ſhall here add.

1. If it be the great prerogative of God, and to him alone belongs to declare things from the beginning to the end, and hold forth the various and moſt remarkable events, which ſhould fall out within time, with their proper circumſtances, yea to diſcover the great revolutions of the world thro' all the ages thereof, when ſecond cauſes in their remoteſt tendency thereto could not be diſcerned, is not this then clear and undeniably true of the ſcripture? 2. As to the ſure and exact performance of the ſame, I muſt make that challenge and atteſtation, which that great ſervant of the Lord, *Joſhua*, did in ſuch a cauſe, *Joſ.* xxiii. 14. if any thing hath hitherto failed, of all which the Lord hath ſpoken in the ſcripture; or if men can inſtance, what ſpecial prediction, or promiſe, (which to this day ſhould have taken place in the ſeaſon thereof) hath miſcarried, or turned abortive, what truth wants its ſeal and confirmation, yea what ſtep of providence, can you point at which does not quadrate, and marvelouſly accord with the word, I challenge an inſtance, but this I am ſure men muſt ſee, there are ſuch things fall out in the event, that are particularly foretold in the ſcripture, ſo ſtrange and marvelous, that in an ordinary way none could have believed, which they now ſee with their own eyes. 3. Do you not ſee the written word as a bright lanthorn attend the church, from the very porch and entry of time, in all her journey, and evidently point at the remarkable times, and revolutions of her caſe, which have have now in a great part gone over her head: yea is it not demonſtratively clear, that the ſun doth not more truly ſhine on this terreſtrial globe, than the ſcripture ſhineth, and doth illuminate the whole frame and ſtructure of providence, and in all theſe ſtrange parts which are acted in the world, moſt certainly takes place, that there is none can walk at random, or by his own counſel direct and ſteer his courſe, but though it is marvelous it is ſure alſo, that the innumerable millons of men who are this day upon earth, in all their various motions, are at preſent fulfilling the determined counſel of God; and

their

their actings, whatever they design therein must be concentrick with his great end, nor out of that bounds can they possibly move. 4. I must attest the world, if they do not see, this way of godliness, which seems to day to be every where spoken against, to be that good and old way, in which are the footsteps of the saints to be found since the beginning, and that it is no new light now broke up in the world; but it is clear, through all ages past, there hath not wanted a continued succession of these, who in this reproached way did serve the God of their fathers; and have sealed the truth, which now from one time, to another, we find still delivered off their hands, to the present generation; and I here challenge the greatest atheists, to which of the saints can they turn, or whom can they instance of that blessed company, since there was a church in the earth, who could ever contradict this, or bear another witness. 5. Must you not confess there is no such deep, in the heart of man, or so close and subtil a convoy of wickedness there, which is not found out in the scripture, and there pointed at; and that none can get themselves hid, or get beyond the reach of this, in these things which they are sure the observing world could never know, but the most secret haunts of their soul are unvailed, which from their dearest friend they have concealed. 6. Can this demonstration of the scripture, and so manifest a witness thereto be denied, that whilst man is a free agent in his actions, and doth therein act spontaneously, he hath notwithstanding of this in his own breast both a judge, and accuser, which though within him, doth without his consent, exercise a power over him, and such an authority which he would, yet cannot decline. 7. I dare attest the conscience of men, who are themselves strangers to the way of God, if they can so far shut their eyes, but they must see serious godliness is a marvelous thing and that there is something here above nature, which by its effects on others, may shew a divine spirit and power, that where-ever it comes makes so great a change, and one to exceed another most discernibly, though of the same parts, that suits and does accommodate it self to the various conditions and employments of men, it puts a special honour on the greatest prince, and does instruct the wise and prudent, yet will it lodge with the poorest artificer in his shop, or labouring man in the field; and does it not also appear, that here must be a native motion, and unconstrained from inward principles, when on outward grounds there is not the least incitement, which shews it is a living thing, that hath its discernible languishing, and wearing out, and its more vigorous actings, as well as any living man; it is strange the report of this, is not matter of astonishment, to bring men once to question, if such an accompt as others give of this marvelous thing, Religion, can be true, how it is here the christian's joy is sown by weeping, and his tears the seed whence gladness of heart breaks up; how sweet that rest is which is found in his work and labour; and with his sowing to the spirit, the harvest then begins, in a present reaping, and his laying forth himself, with a giving of the heart unto God, does enrich the giver by such a gift; yea that here men should differ so much when alone with God and brought near him from what they are at other times, and in these retirements of their soul, have that discovery and conception of this truth, which is not to be found in turning over the voluminous tractates of the greatest writers. 8. If men have any serious reflection, and do not shut up the Bible, can they shun this remark thereof; how well it answers the various successions of time, and so marvelous a variety of things that are so many ages distant from other, yea that all alongst there is a gradual discovery and breaking up of the gospel in the several times of the church, where it is easy to discern the antiquity of this excellent record, and so great a distance of time betwixt the penmen thereof, yet in its composure is one

entire piece, ſo connect and cloſely knit together, that men may ſee the ſame ſpirit in the whole, and in each part thereof, moving and carrying forward one great deſign. 9. I ſhall but further add, if religion hath a being and reality, which men cannot loſe the ſenſe of, and deny, without falling ſo far below reaſon, into the condition of the beaſts, muſt there not be a rule alſo? for it is eaſy to judge in what ſtrange and monſtrous ſhape this would appear, were it left to the choice and arbitrement of men; now let the moſt profeſſed atheiſts turn their eyes through the whole earth, and in a calm and ſober compoſure of ſpirit but judge, if there be any thing more abſurd, and to aſtoniſhment irrational, than that face and appearance religion hath amongſt theſe where this excellent rule of the ſcripture is not owned, yea could theſe ſubject themſelves to ſuch extravagancies and therein turn ſo mad, without a divine ſtroke on their judgment and reaſon, which the righteous God in verification of his word inflicts on ſuch who do even ſhut their ears, from the report of the truth, the ſound whereof goes forth through the earth, and here I challenge men though ſtrangers themſelves to ſerious religion, if at a diſtance it doth not appear, how great a difference there is betwixt theſe parts of the world, where the goſpel ſhines in its power, and the reſt of the nations.

The End of the Firſt Part.

THE

THE

PREFACE.

IT ſeems a ſad conjunction in this day of a ſtrange ſecurity moſt are fallen into, when ſuch unuſual awakening preſages of judgment are a crying voice from the Lord, but yet a deaf ear; how the awe and dread of light, which uſed to appear on mens conſcience, though otherways haters thereof, is now ſo far gone, as if the preſent age had found a new way to eſcape the moſt clear diſcoveries of the truth, which was not formerly known; which too ſadly preſages ſome ſtrange and aſtoniſhing ſtrokes of judgment muſt ſpeak that, which with greateſt contempt hath been rejected from the word: Oh that there might be an awaking to duty yet *before the decree bring forth*, *Zeph.* ii. 2. For tho' repentance can never be in vain, where it is in truth, yet it is clear, this may come too late to prevent a temporal ſtroke; and is there not cauſe to expect the *Lord* will take ſome ſtrange way to plead for making himſelf known to be *God*, and enforce the certainty and truth of his word, ſince men have got ſo far beyond the reach of an ordinary cure, that the unheard of wickedneſs of this time is come to ſeek its patrociny from Atheiſm; and the alone relief moſt ſeem to have againſt the tormenting fears of future things, and an eternal ſtate, is by weakning their aſſent to the truth; but they cannot weaken the truth, which ſtands unſhaken and brings ſuch an aſſurance therewith to thoſe who know it, as can fully quiet and ſupport the ſoul, though they were left alone to walk in this way. Yea, though the power and life of godlineſs lie deep and hid, and to the experienced chriſtian alone is ſuch a demonſtration of the certainty of ſupernatural truths, and their verification to the ſoul, that none elſe can know at a diſtance what they feel and aſſuredly enjoy; yet are the *Indicia* ſo obvious, I mean ſuch clear, rational, and convincing evidences of the ſame, that how men poſſibly ſhould get theſe put by, and rejected in this age, is not eaſy to comprehend, but that a real irritation and torment upon their ſpirit, from ſuch clearneſs of evidence now accompanying the truth, is the great influencing cauſe of ſo prodigious an Atheiſm this day within the church, beyond what hath been in times of greater darkneſs. For clearing this, and to bear ſome witneſs to the unſpotted *Faithfulneſs* of God, which as the Sun in its ſtrength keeps its courſe whatever clouds interveen, amidſt the darkneſs and confuſions of this time, is this following diſcourſe intended.

For the ſubject, it is great, yea, that whereon the whole ſuperſtructure of truth and godlineſs ſtands; ſo as it calls for ſome awful diſtance, in our neareſt converſe therewith; but ſuch where with an unſpeakable delight we may ſee its ancient ſtanding, the fulneſs of evidence it brings therewith; theſe near and ſenſible approaches this hath to a chriſtian's ſoul; that ſurpriſing brightneſs with which it is ſtill found to break up, when at the darkeſt, and as mid-night with the church; the certainty and fixedneſs of its courſe amidſt all the reelings of the earth; its ſuitableneſs to anſwer all that can moſt diſquiet any of the ſaints, and let them

ſee how clear and ſtraight the way of the Lord is, amidſt the greateſt confuſions of the time, yea, how viſibly his *Faithfulneſs* is commenſurate to the whole work of providence in the earth.

For the intent and deſign of this ſhort treatiſe, the reader can moſt fitly judge in his peruſal; but this, with ſome ſerious aim hath been propoſed, to appear in behalf of the glorious *Faithfulneſs* of God in his word, by witneſſing thereto, in an age when this was never more directly impugned, and all poſſible artifice on foot to caſt reproach thereon; and for being an help to the chriſtian's joy, to ſhew what this day is under his reach, and near even at his hand, for attaining more clear and ſolid impreſſions of the truth, and certainty of the ſcripture, than moſt ſeem to look after; ſince it is too obvious, what heſitation and dark apprehenſions moſt have about ſpiritual truths, in not knowing the great reality which is there, and how no ſcience can have ſuch firm and clear demonſtrations; in purſuance of this ſcope ſome few things peculiarly intended here, I ſhall premiſe:

1. To witneſs how great and marvelous things are in our ſight, and have a real being before us; that none can deny to be an undoubted product of the ſcripture, and there only could have been made known; in which divine power eminently exerted and above all poſſible reach of natural cauſes, may be as clearly ſeen, as in the moſt extraordinary miracles that ever the church knew; and how confirming a ſeal that is greater than theſe to the truth is ſtill continued before us.

2. It is not to aſſert, or give ſome naked diſcovery of theſe great ſupernatural truths in the word, but to lead into the *Things* themſelves, in their real being and exiſtence that this is intended, as truths to which there is a more near approach by ſeeing, taſte, and as it were by ſome touch, than ſeems by moſt to be underſtood, how near and feeling a converſe is to be reached betwixt the intellect and the object; yea, thus what great improvements might be made of ſenſe in its ſubſerviency to faith, and a more full repoſe and quiet of the ſoul for adventuring on the word; ſo as the way of believing, which to many is ſo dark and ſtrange a thing, ſhould be in that manner comfortable and clear, with as quieting ſecurity as we could have in the way of ſenſe and feeling; the clearing of which in this following eſſay, in nothing will be found to juſtle with that great duty of walking by faith, and to believe againſt hope and viſible appearances of the event, but as a ſingular help thereto.

3. Its intent is to ſhew, how by no chance or poſſible caſualty, the truth of ſuch great events of the word, and certainty of its verification in theſe can be called in queſtion; but as to the church in the great providences of the time, ſo to a chriſtian in his private caſe, is it moſt demonſtrable, how every ſtep in experience, and in the way of ſenſe is by line and rule with as ſure and infallible a connexion betwixt this and the written word, as there can be in nature betwixt the cauſe and the effect, the head-ſpring and the ſtream.

4. To clear alſo the way of the Lord, and certainty of his truth in this very dark hour, when his work about the reformed church ſo remarkably appears to be a work of judgment; for conſidering of which, ſome aſtoniſhing providences of his time did give a ſerious riſe.

5. Here is ſome aim to hold forth clear and ſolid grounds from the Scripture, with reſpect to the ſad appearances now of future things, and too anxiouſly diſquieting preſages many have thereof; which (whilſt the earth ſeems to be at reſt, and as buried for the moſt part in a deep ſleep) are ready to faint and over-whelm the ſpirits of ſome; not conſidering what great aſſurances from the Lord are in the word given, for a more comfortable proſpect of future events, than it ſeems we allow our ſelves, and how well it is ſuited to anſwer ſuch very ſadning queries; what will become of the Churches? Of the Truth, of the Poſterity; when the enemy is *ſowing tares*; the ſtorm groweth; a dead palſie we are fallen into, yea, whilſt every man ſeems to be *with his hand on his loins, alas! for that day is great, it is the time of* Jacob's *trouble, but he ſhall be delivered out of the ſame*, Jer. xxx. 7.

6. I ſhall add no more, but that with ſome ſpecial tendency this following diſcourſe may be ſeen to witneſs, how it is no graſping at a ſhadow to be a chriſtian, and no ſuch realities as theſe they find, in a time when the profeſſed principles and work of ſome is to make void the very being and truth of ſerious practical Religion.

For what reflections I may be obnoxious to, in adventuring yet more on ſo great a ſubject, I ſhall ſay little; but if any fruit and ſolid advantage be found in its peruſal, I might then hope there ſhould need few words of apology; ſome eſſays at duty may have theſe diſcouragements and difficulties to wreſtle with, that if there be not a doing for the Lord, it were a ſad part to act. Theſe few things I have here confidence to premiſe, for which I ſtand at a higher bar than the judgment of men; 1. That in this following diſcourſe, I have ſought *Truth*, and not to follow the chaſe of airy and naked notions, as having ſome preſſure on my own ſpirit, that theſe could not anſwer to: It

is a great thing to believe the being of God, and that nothing fails of his word; I must say, were these truly believed, it might be strange a christian's life were not more in a continued wonder, and with some greater transports of joy. 2. I have ground to say, That no fear from these times hath oft pressed me with more anxiety, than of these sad consequences, such shaking things as have of late occurred, with the abounding of offences, were like to have, by a too visible tendency to turn many off all perswasion of the truth; which was one special incitement to some further prosecution of what I had begun on this subject; though I must confess with such wrestlings on my own spirit, to trouble the world more by any such appearance, that if something from the Lord very immediately had not been to determine and clear, it was some service he would not reject, I should have needed no apology for such a thing, but laid it aside. I hope the reader may not find cause to quarrel with an unnecessary multiplying of words, or that his time is encroached upon that way, so far as the expressing the matter with some plainness could admit; nor from any coincidence of purposes, with what was held forth in the *first part*, though the subject and scope be much one; I confess, in handling of both, the frequent changes of my health, the untroddenness of this path, the weight and concernment of the truths, with some study (if I may say without mistake) to believe what I wrote, and not easily to admit things, or take on trust, without a clear and quieting perswasion thereof, was not without some peculiar difficulty, beyond what might have been in greater enlargements on another subject. This favour I crave from the reader, in his perusal either of this or the former part, to take a serious look of the whole, before he pass his judgment on a part, things there being so connected together in their tendency to answer the scope.

No time did ever more pressingly call for establishment in the truth than this our lot is fallen in, and to be solidly founded on such a ground, that can bear up though all other props should be shaken. The faith and patience of the saints hath had a sore conflict, and the darkest part may be yet to go over; but 'tis well it cannot be such as to out-go that light and comfort which is in the scripture; *Unless thy law had been my delight, I had perished in my affliction*, *Psal.* cxix. 32. Were it known what it is to have these so near, how easy should it be to reason with what seems most peculiarly to influence the heaviness and trouble of many this day. 1. From the pressure of affliction and multiplied temptations, which with some now may be so sore, as the waters are ready to *enter into their soul*, and put them to question their principles; but thus is the Lord's way with his people known, when he brings them into straits, to give them a greater light than before; as *Luther* after sore wrestlings said, *statim apparuit mihi nova facies Scripturæ*; the afflicted have their peculiar comforts, much beyond others; and know what it is to bear up the heart, that it is stronger than it self. 2. Such is the tribulation of these times as may seem more imbittering to some, from the different lot they see of others; how many *stretch themselves on their couches, that chant to the sound of the Viol, and drink wine in bowls, but they are not grieved for the afflictions of* Joseph, *Amos* vi. 4, 5, 6; Few seem to know the heart of the afflicted, or are found to act the *Samaritan*'s part; and how rare are these *who search out the cause of the poor, whom men regard not*; and oft have no witness to their griefs but one, but is indeed one for all, *Thou God seest me*, *Gen.* xvi. 13. It is in the Bible the cause of the oppressed will find patrociny, when no where else; nor can that assurance fail, *but your sorrow shall be turned into joy*, Joh. xvi. 30. Every day hath this work, to put some part of the christian's griefs, and the most desirable enjoyments of others by, which can never possibly be re-acted, nor return any more again. 3. Are not prejudices at holiness now such as might put christians more on their guard for a solid founding on the scripture, yea, when it is so clear truth suffers not at that rate, nor is the shaking of many, in such hazard, from what visible opposition is thereto, as by these more subtil conveyances of reproach; whilst a serious care to prevent this, or to advance the repute and credit of that excellent profession of holiness, seems to have but little weight upon us. *Truth* this day is as a broken and shipwreckt interest in the eyes of many, offences have come in as a flood upon the church, whence a spirit of atheism hath in a strange manner got up, and been upon the ascendant, but a recovery must be of all that is lost; when that *creating*-word from the Lord on the *dry bones* comes to bring them together, and put flesh and sinews thereon. There are *three* things seem this day to be a difficult part of a christians work; though duties which had never a more peculiar season and call thereto, than now.

First, *By a manifestation of the truth, to commend our selves to every man's conscience, in the sight of God*, 2 *Cor.* iv. 2. So as in the worst of times holiness may appear, which with the greatest lustre and most advantage doth then commend its truth and certainty to others; nor can the time be such as this can want some dread and awe therewith, to draw forth a

teſtimouy from its greateſt haters, when to enforce it the more, the world may ſee how well a cloſe and fervent adherence to the truth, with a convincing prudence can evidently meet, ſo as to ſhew none are more men than ſuch who are moſt chriſtians; yea, how theſe upon higher inducements and principles than any outward intereſt, muſt be ſwayed in purſuance of their duty.

2. It may appear a very difficult ſervice this day to ſtand in the gap when a breach is made; or how to come in the room of an interceſſor betwixt a highly provoked God, and a people in whoſe caſe ſo much cauſe is to dread the near approach of that ſentence, *Zach.* xi. 9. The duty is undeniable, to purſue a national reconciliation as well as perſonal, though but one were found to adventure thereon, *to lift up a prayer for the remnant that is left*; and put ſo ſad a ruin under the great high prieſt's hand; yea, ſuch doth the Lord look after, when judgment is ready to go forth; *And I ſought for a man that ſhould make up the hedge and ſtand in the gap before me, that I ſhould not deſtroy the land, but I found none, Ezek.* xxii. 30. This ſeems but little believed, how far he does ſubject even the intereſts of a nation to the prayers of his people; *Iſa.* xlv. 1. yea, what upon a *peradventure* hath been reached in the moſt hopeleſs eſſays, *Jon.* iii. 9. but oh how ſad when theſe who are moſt concerned to keep a land from ſinking, it cannot bear.

3. It may be too obvious, how difficult a part of a chriſtian's work this is, to walk aright towards others in a diſtempered time, when a ſpirit of jealouſy ſeems to be poured out; ſo little oneneſs of heart oft found, where there wants not oneneſs of principles; and too viſible an abounding of theſe evils the apoſtle ſpeaks of, as ſome part of the church's ruin in that time, *envy, ſtrife, railings, and evil ſurmiſings*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 4. *Two* things may be inſtanced, which ſeem to give a peculiar riſe thereto: one is, little perſonal freedom both chriſtians and miniſters have amongſt themſelves, whilſt ſo ſad a liberty is oft taken to ſpeak at a diſtance to the prejudice of others; yea, when it cannot be hid, how many ſuch things that have begot diſtance, jealouſy and bitterneſs of ſpirit, upon more clear and convincing trial are oft found a grapling with their own ſhadow; thence gets Satan ſuch advantage, and the prayers of the church are obſtructed more than is laid to heart. Some ſins ſeem not once to come near, diſtreſs our conſcience as a tranſgreſſion of the rule. I confeſs, one of the difficult works of a chriſtian this is, that needs ſome ſpecial touch of the great healer's hand, on the ſpirits of his people, to make eaſy, how to walk with that tenderneſs, prudence, and yet freedom of ſpirit, in duties we owe to others. But a ſecond I muſt name, that gives too viſible a riſe to our ruin this day from our ſelves more than from all our adverſaries, the want of an *humble* ſpirit, in ſo remarkably humbling a time; what rare excellencies hath this oft ſpoiled! and whether in a nation or a man, it is that the holy God will contend with; I am ſure, if our ſad diſtempers were followed more to the true riſe, here it might be found. But I fear to have tranſgreſſed by ſo long a preface.

THE

THE

Faithfulneſs of God,

CONSIDERED and CLEARED, &c.

PART II.

Lam. iii. 23.

Great is thy Faithfulneſs.

CHAP. I.

HE prophet being taught of God, to endite a lamentation for the church under her captivity, and to incite this almoſt cruſhed people to a duty ſuiting their preſent caſe, which was not to faint, or have their hands falling down on their loins, but that their eye might affect their heart with ſome feeling impreſſion of ſuch a ſtroke; hath a remarkable pauſe here, and ſweetly draws his breath, in reflecting on the way of the Lord, what a mixture there was of mercy as well as of judgment in ſo deplorable a ſtate, as is clear, *v.* 21. *This I re-call to mind, therefore have I hope,* &c. and thus having once got under his ſight ſome appearances (though ſmall) of light and comfort, in ſo thick a darkneſs, he quits not that ſcent, until he have the faithfulneſs of God made as convincing to this people, in his compaſſion and tenderneſs, as in his ſeverity.

Some things are obſervable here for clearing the text, which in a few words I ſhall touch.

1. The time and condition of the *jewiſh* church, when ſo great a witneſs is thus given; it was under the *Babyloniſh* captivity, even whilſt the devaſtation

of their land, the ſad ruins of the city and temple were before them; when viſion did fail the prophets, the ways of *Zion* mourned, her people fell into the enemies hand, and there was none to help; to ſhew what may be laid in their way for ſtrengthning, who are in earneſt to eſſay it; and how a cruſhed and dead hope may have its very firſt quickning in the grave.

2. It is here we ſee a moſt rare contexture betwixt the firſt and latter part of the verſe; and how indiſſoluble a tie there is betwixt truth and mercy, which to divide were no more poſſible, than to have a conception of day-light without the ſun; truth being the fountain-cauſe that brings mercy forth, and therefore *are they new every morning, becauſe great is his faithfulneſs.*

3. We may ſee the peculiar intent of this ſcripture, to hold forth the unſpotted faithfulneſs of God in ſo ſad a time; which is that attribute amongſt his glorious excellencies, he hath choſen in a ſpecial manner for revealing himſelf to men, as eminently expreſſive of his being, veracity and power; the rectitude and immutability of his nature; a truth, though we cannot comprehend (for the neareſt approaches of reaſon here, will ſtill leave us at an infinite diſtance), yet are we called to an humble enquiry, for our further joy and eſtabliſhment in the faith thereof.

4. The making out of this great attribute muſt be underſtood with reſpect to the written word, and theſe expreſs engagements exhibited there to the church, where the holy God by a marvelous condeſcention hath ſet bounds to himſelf, with a liberty for all fleſh, to challenge if his truth there does in any thing fail; and thus is it clear, how his works are done in faithfulneſs and truth; not only in an exact conformity to that eternal idea thereof in the divine underſtanding, but to his revealed councels in the ſcripture, which is the adequate ſign of his ancient purpoſe and decrees in all that concern the church, and the conduct of providence within time.

5. The preſent advantage of ſo clear a teſtimony to the truth for that time, is obſervable to acquit the way of the Lord under theſe dark and ſhaking providences; and let men ſee with what an uninterrupted courſe his faithfulneſs doth ſtill ſhine, whatever clouds interpoſe between them and it; yea, how great a ſtability is in the worſt of times for the church's intereſt, and for all that a chriſtian can adventure on this bleſſed ſecurity, whilſt every day gives ſo ſad an account of human props. Now from the text thus cleared, I ſhall premiſe ſome few doctrinal truths.

Doct. 1. They run not that errand in vain, whoſe work is to commend the way of the Lord in a dark time; for it ſhall commend it ſelf to them; nor will they want ſtrengthning remarks of his truth and tenderneſs, who have a ſerious obſerving eye for them. Thus we find the church was taken up in a fainting hour of trial, and what ſucceſs it had. It is true, a chriſtian's eſſays for this end, may ſometimes be like that of *Elijah*'s ſervant, to go once and again, yea, to ſeven times and ſee nothing; and the firſt breaking up of their hope, have ſo ſmall an appearance as the hand-breadth of that cloud had to him, though at laſt it made the heavens black therewith, and the return as large as its delay ſeemed long; but whatever thus from the Lord is for trial, it is ſure the faithful improving of a little this way, muſt ſtill lead into a growing ſtrength, and a ſerious aim to keep up the credit of the truth both on their own heart and with others, can leave none behind. Oh what rare mercies lie oft hid under ſome dark and afflicting providences, even whilſt they are at our hand, and are not ſeen, from the frowardneſs of an imbittered ſpirit, that will not let its own eyes ſee the advantage of ſuch a caſe; but as if they did well to be angry againſt God, will quarrel more his croſſing their humour, than obſerve his tenderneſs for promoting their real good, and cry againſt him, becauſe he will not undoe them.

Doct.

Doct. 2. They are on a choice ſcent, for their ſolid ſtrengthning in the truth, let the times be never ſo ſhaking, whoſe work is to keep ſight and follow with their eye the faithfulneſs of God in the providences of their life; yea, does ſo follow this in their mercies, as that which is to them the better part of ſuch a mercy, when it brings ſomething confirming with it to the truth, and for their eſtabliſhment that way. Thus was the church here at work in a ſad time, and through the whole ſcripture is remarkable; did *Jacob* divide theſe in his obſerving, *Gen.* xxxii. 10. *I am not worthy of the leaſt of thy mercies, and of the faithfulneſs thou haſt ſhewed to thy ſervant*; or in his pleading with God, 12. *And thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do the good.* And how concerned was *David*, to have them ſtill kept together in his view, mercy and truth, as in *Pſal.* xxv. 10. lii. 8. lxxxix. 1, 2. But oh it ſeems ſuch in theſe times have had ſome other ſight and conception of this duty than is now underſtood; and thus have ſought a more near intercourſe with the truth and certainty of the Lord's being God, with which in the very notion thereof, our converſe this day ſeems to be rare.

Doct. 3. Whatever eſſays men have to darken the *faithfulneſs* of God in his word, yet is it ſuch as muſt be ſhewed forth, and every time pay in ſome tribute thereto; therefore is ſo remarkable a cry here, to awake mens ſpirits for obſerving this, *great is his faithfulneſs.* It is his praiſe and declarative glory in the earth, the ultimate end of his works, that point where all the lines of providence at laſt do meet, and therefore cannot want an herauld, though the ſtones of the ground ſhould ariſe to ſpeak it forth; for a greater neceſſity is here, than for the fire to burn, or the ſparks to flie upward, that the glory of the only true God, in the verification of his word be from one generation to another witneſſed. So excellent an uſe is this, that a chriſtian ſhould think he lives, and hath a deſirable being, that in his day he may put to this ſeal, that *God is true*; nor needs any fear whatever time or capacity they are in, that it's in earneſt they level at ſuch a mark and miſs it. O what pleaſure is thus found, which the voluptuous man never knew; and how far is it above all he can have, or ſo much as apprehend in his wallowing in ſenſuality.

I ſuppoſe a chriſtian at ſuch a ſtrait, that he could but ſpeak four words to the world, and be ſtruck dumb through the reſt of his time; and that upon this account he were pained, how to ſpeak them to moſt advantage, could he eaſe his ſoul more, or have a choice beyond this for giving glory to God, when he might ſay ſo little then here, *Great is his faithfulneſs.*

Doct. 4. That it is not a flouriſhing ſtate of the church only, and her riſing, but her ruin alſo does convincingly ſhew forth this. From this ſcripture may be clear; yea, is the voice of the rod as well as of the word, where both mercy and judgment meet in the ſame witneſs; and though the bitterneſs of ſin, and that ſad eclipſe it cauſeth betwixt God and the ſoul, is ſad indeed, yet is it ſuch as may be no leſs for a chriſtian's confirming in the truth than the joy of his preſence. If dark and afflicting times were not, how much of the Bible were as loſt, and its uſe wholly fruſtrate? We ſtand amazed at ſome terrible acts of the Lord in the earth, but conſider not whoſe errand they go, and for what end, that it is to let men ſee, *when he turns a defenced city into a ruinous heap, his councels of old are faithfulneſs and truth, Iſa.* xxv. 1, 2. which if they will not ſee in the word, read it they muſt, though it ſhould be in characters of blood.

Doct. 5. It is a begun cure to the church, and ſo far a day-break under the darkeſt trial, as there is a clearing of the way of the Lord, that in faithfulneſs and truth he hath done it. Thus in ſo diſmal a time, when *Judah*

was a wilderneſs, and *Jeruſalem* a deſolation, and their ruins ſuch, as if deſtruction needed not to ariſe the ſecond time; we may ſee how this was as the turning the light ſide of their trouble towards them; when once they knew where they were, and how all that was gone over their head did confirm his unſpotted faithfulneſs; for thus they may be further perſwaded of the Lord's being God, and how he gives his word a being in the moſt amazing acts of judgment; they ſee his glory ſhine forth here, and that great end ſecured, wherein they are to rejoice whatever miſcarrying be of other inferior ends; thus however the ſtorm blow, and though the earth ſhould all be in a combuſtion, this greateſt intereſt is ſure, which is the faithfulneſs of God, they know it ſtands immoveable, and no loſs or ſhipwreck there, on which more than all that is within time they have in dependance; yea, here the credit of the truth is cleared, the darkneſs of the trial is ſo far gone, and the church brought to the light, to ſee both the cauſe and cure of her ſtroke, and needs not grope to find the door for an out-gate.

Doct. 6. There is a ſeaſon and advantage duty hath, that gives a peculiar beauty thereto; which the prophet does here notice, and thus is preſſed to own the *faithfulneſs of God*, when the faith of many was ready to be ſhaken with the ſtrange providences of that time. They are indeed bleſſed, who ſow beſides all waters, and find their work where-ever it is laid to their hand; and it is ſure, where love gets the command over the heart, thoſe cannot want an advantage for their maſter's ſervice; nor can they loſe ſuch a talent, but by laying its uſe aſide; yet ſad experience can alſo ſhew, how difficult the work of the preſent day does oft prove to the next, and that the ſeaſon of duty, and for ſome ſervice to the truth, may be ſuch a tide, as will not flow twice in one life.

Doct. 7. It is not a truth only, what theſe words do aſſert; but there is an infinite *greatneſs* applicable to it above all created things; the diſcovery whereof did cauſe ſo aſtoniſhing a tranſport here, *Great is his faithfulneſs*; a truth which none can over-ſpeak, yea, where no poſſible hyperbole could ever be; and as no age of the church hath wanted cauſe for ſuch a witneſs, I muſt ſay, none ſtands more debtor to this than the preſent time. This is the theme and ſubject to be followed forth here, which under the ſenſe of peculiar engagements thereto, and ſome impreſſion of the majeſty of God, whoſe declarative glory in the earth is ſo much concerned therein, and ſo viſibly impugned this day by many of the generation, I deſire to adventure on, and to offer humbly ſome further light to what I have elſewhere eſſay'd on ſo great a ſubject; and in the firſt place ſome clear demonſtrative grounds of that infinite greatneſs, to which no angels nor men may or can lay claim; I ſhall but in a few words inſtance.

1. How *great* is it, where ſuch aſſurances are given to the church, that the Lord muſt ceaſe to be God, and thoſe viſible heavens and earth ceaſe to have a being, before his faithfulneſs in one jot of the written word fail. This is that ground the chriſtian's faith hath in the darkeſt day to caſt anchor on, and it is ſure, is no bottoming on a dream, when it is ſuch *wherein it is impoſſible for God to lie*, *Heb.* vi. 18. *Et cui non poteſt ſubeſſe falſum.* Contigency hath no dominion here, nor man's free will, whoſe riſe and working is within time; but his word is that before which all fleſh muſt keep ſilent, *my councel ſhall ſtand, ſaith the Lord, and I will do all my pleaſure*; to which all ſecond cauſes, both in their operation and purpoſe are indiſſolubly linked.

2. Is it not *great* whereon ſuch a weight does this day lean, which is no leſs than that burden of the viſible heavens and earth, with their continued order

order and courſe, the whole militant church, the everlaſting ſtate and bleſſedneſs of the elect, and all their intereſts within time, which are on this great foundation rolled over and ſure; yea, it is here the perſonal weights and burthen of every one of the ſaints, the up-riſing of the afflicted and bowed down, the credit and ſupport of many, whoſe alone ſecurity for their daily bread is the promiſe of God; and their venture whoſe *believing in hope* is ſuch oft, *that it is againſt hope*, and all viſible appearances, which on this alone ground are enſured; the leaſt part whereof were enough to ſink us, if that were not to bear all up, *Great is his faithfulneſs.*

3. How infinitely *great* is this, in the import thereof; which (I am ſure) if underſtood, we could not in ſo ordinary a way look upon the ſcripture, when it is no leſs than an infallible aſſurance given from heaven to the church, and here upon earth put on record for things of higheſt concernment; wherein before angels and men it is enſured by him who lives for ever and ever.

1. That whilſt time is, the ordinances of heaven, ſhall continue as they are, there ſhall be ſummer and winter, ſeed-time and harveſt; and therefore even he who ſoweth the ground ſhould ſow it in hope.

2. That the world ſhall be no more deluged by rain, for which the written word is our alone ſecurity.

3. That as the Lord is God, his church ſhall be continued in the earth, and a ſeed to ſerve him whilſt the Sun and Moon endure.

4. That none of the ſaints ſhall be *utterly caſt down*, or by any temptation ruined, as to final apoſtacy, *being kept by the power of God, through faith unto ſalvation*, 1 Pet. i. 5.

5. That he on whom help is laid, *ſhall be ſatisfied with the travail of his ſoul; ſhall ſee his ſeed, and prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand*, *Iſa.* liii. 10. Yea, no nullity or revocation ſhall for ever be of that bleſſed indenture he hath made with his church.

6. That he will make them what he hath required them to be; and his own promiſe ſhall be the ſpring of theſe qualifications annexed thereto.

7. That none can condemn, whom Jeſus Chriſt hath juſtified, and to his alone righteouſneſs have fled for their refuge.

8. That they ſhall be for ever with God, and *received into glory, whom he guides by his counſel here.* Thus for all theſe great intereſts does his faithfulneſs ſtand good; and what yet remains to perfect the whole work of providence in the earth, the chriſtian's conduct and ſupport in his journey, their ſafe paſſage through death, yea, the keeping of their duſt in the grave, and a raiſing of the ſame body at the laſt day.

4. His faithfulneſs is *great*, in that continued courſe it hath had with the church ſince the beginning of time to this day, and never loſt ground, but is ſtill the ſame, and with the ſame ſtrength hath ſhined under all theſe aſſaults which have been for its darkning. It was at the firſt being of the creation, that ſo great a light begun to dawn, *when the morning ſtars ſung together, and the ſons of God ſhouted for joy.* What a tranſport muſt this have been when theſe bleſſed triumphant ſpirits the angels, could in one moment ſee themſelves brought out of pure nothing, into that ineffable light of ſeeing God, with ſo clear a diſcovery of his name and attributes. It is true, there is a gradual light and opening up of the truth, and ſome more ſignal periods of time, to which a brighter ſhining forth of the faithfulneſs of God hath its reſpect. There was a veil over the times of the *Old Teſtament*, and ſcripture-truths then much ſealed up, nor was the Lord ſo remarkably known by his name *Jehova*, *Exod.* iii. 8. in giving a being to his promiſes. But now are come theſe bleſſed times of the *New Teſtament*, whoſe work is to open up what

then was ſealed, and bring forth ſuch long deſired truths to a viſible performance; though this alſo hath a more peculiar reſpect to theſe laſt ages in which we now are fallen; and it is ſure, were this once finiſhed, and that the written word had done its work, for what concerns the church within time, there ſhould be no more to do, but the glorious faithfulneſs of God, which never yet ceaſed to ſhine (though with a gradual aſcent) had gone its courſe, and were at the full and perfect day.

5. This alſo is *great* in the extent and theſe large bounds, where this day it ſhines forth, which is not in the viſible church only, or where the fame of the goſpel is ſpread (though there alone it is believed and known) but goeth as far as the whole work and conduct of providence through the earth: for in no corner ſo remote or dark does this want a witneſs; it being clear, 1. That as far as the power of a natural conſcience is, and where men are conſtrained to obſerve a power higher than man, to difference betwixt good and evil, even there is its taking place diſplayed. 2. Where the ſun doth riſe and go down, and the raging ſea hath its appointed bounds; for theſe do witneſs through the whole earth, that God, whoſe promiſe and appointment they are, and which no human power could poſſibly effectuate, is *faithful* and *true*. 3. This muſt ſhine forth, and have the extent of its diſcovery in as large a bounds, as there is men; who cannot exert reaſon, and not ſee that marvelous order and dependence of things which is through the creation: ſo that though they know not the word, yet is this truth of it in ſuch great letters written out, as all may read, upon the heavens and the earth, *His work is perfect, and all his ways are judgment*, *Deut* xxxii. 4. 4. What a viſible witneſs hath this, in the greateſt darkneſs and barbarity of the earth? yea upon ſuch an account, that ſo great a part thereof lyeth as an out-field, without that pale and incloſure the goſpel hath made? for it is ſure, here is an obvious ſeal to the ſcripture, as well as the being and flouriſhing of the church. 5. Which is more marvelous, it is not in the dark places of the earth only, but in that place of horror and utter darkneſs, where this doth eminently ſhine forth; for it is thoſe unſpeakable torments, with the continued cries of the damned in hell do never ceaſe, nor never will, to bear ſuch a witneſs, God is *faithful* and *true*; no poſſible atheiſm can be there, whoſe felt experience doth force them to know, that God is what his word declared him to be, in that unſpotted attribute of his juſtice. Yea, if a full hiſtory could be writ of this world, what in all times hath occurred both to nations and particular perſons, (if this were poſſible) what elſe would it be found to be, but as a great and exact hiſtory of the Bible, where the greateſt atheiſt might ſee theſe truths they read, there writ in moſt viſible realities before them, *Et quod mundus nihil aliud eſt, quam Deus explicatus ſecundum Scripturam?*

6. What cauſe hath the church to witneſs, great is the faithfulneſs of God, from its product, I mean thoſe great and wonderful events of the ſcripture, in which this day it hath a viſible performance before us; ſuch events, which all may ſee a power above nature, and the energy of natural cauſes could only bring forth; yea, that theſe are not at a diſtance, but ſo near, as if our eyes be not ſhut, a ſeal to the truth, greater than miracles or any extraordinary ſigns that ever were given to the church, might be found at our hand. This is a ſubject of great import, to confirm and moſt ſolidly fix the ſaints in the faith of the word, in ſo ſhaking a time, which were it underſtood, no diſcovery within time could more help to make our joy full. Which before I touch in ſome particular inſtances, where its truth and certainty may be demonſtrate, I ſhall firſt offer theſe few things to be previouſly conſidered for giving light thereto.

1. It

1. It is undeniable, and we are eye witneſſes thereto, that ſuch events of the ſcripture are, yea before the world brought forth, which can be clearly evinced to fall under no poſſibility of ſecond cauſes; and are not ſome rare contingencies apt to beget admiration amongſt men, by reaſon of their ignorance, but ſuch that do as evidently witneſs a divine and ſupernatural power, exerted therein, for bringing them forth, as there is in raiſing the dead, dividing the ſea, or cauſing the ſun to ſtand ſtill in its ordinary courſe.

2. It may be clearly evinced, theſe are ſuch events, that no human knowledge could have poſſibly foreſeen, or from principles of reaſon have found the leaſt ground to conjecture their falling out; and are not natural verities, which from any imbred notions thereof in the ſoul, could have ever had a riſe in our thoughts, if by the written word ſo great a diſcovery had not come.

3. As a further witneſs to their truth, and that here can be no poſſible impoſture or deceit, we ſee a moſt perfect Idea and comprehenſion of all theſe marvelous events in the ſcripture, that are thus brought forth in our view, which as we read them there, ſo are they certainly found to take place, and the one not more viſibly clear than the other.

4. Since the neareſt objects do moſt excite and affect men, if they be of no leſs weight than theſe that are tranſmitted at a diſtance; this advantage hath the church here, in theſe great and wonderful events of the ſcripture, that it is not on others credit and teſtimony they are to admit ſuch things, but may come near and ſee with their eyes the truth thereof, yea how it is known as it were by ſenſible touch and feeling; there is I confeſs an unanſwerable atteſtation of the truth by extraordinary miracles, which with the firſt dawning of the goſpel were given to the church; yet we ſee (though ſuch want not, beſide divine authority, moſt clear demonſtrative grounds of their certainty to reaſon) how little weight theſe are found to have to affect or convince the world, looking thereon at ſo great a diſtance of time; ſo hard it is for men to be ſuitably ſtirred up with any thing that is not in our preſent ſight.

5. Such are theſe wonderful events of the ſcripture (here in ſome inſtances after touched) that all may ſee they are not a tranſient glance, which at ſome rare time only have been found to fall out; but it can be demonſtrated, the greateſt miracles the church ever knew, are yet in her ſight, and have been continued under the *New Teſtament*, by that marvelous verification of the word unto men; though ſome of theſe which have reſpect to ſome ſpecial periods of time, are now more conſpicuous, and evidently brought forth in theſe laſt ages of the church. O what a ſtroke is it on our reaſon, that the moſt immediate and viſible appearances of God do not affect, or have that deep impreſſion on the mind, if they be not extraordinary and new! Thus in the greateſt things of nature, how much is the world taken with a monſter, that doth little regard the bringing forth of a perfect man, which is indeed more wonderful; we look with amazement on a Meteor, who with ſmall reſpect can paſs by thoſe glorious bodies of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, (I confeſs, theſe rare glances of a divine extraordinary power call aloud for mens grave and ſerious obſerving, and ſome other improvement, than by moſt, uſe to be made thereof.) But it is ſure, the church this day wants not miracles, which is not conſidered, that in no ſtrange and extraordinary path theſe now are to be ſought, but in that high and beaten road of the ſcripture, and its accompliſhment. And therefore is it, that theſe unuſual appearances of God, which in the church's infancy were ſuited to awake men to an advertence to the truth, and confirm the ſame, do this day ceaſe, becauſe the unſealing of the ſcripture in the times of the *New Teſtament*, was to bring greater things forth

before us for confirming the truth, which are to be found by our taking heed to this more ſure word of propheſie that countervails all theſe. But thus he goes by on our right and left hand, yet men perceive not, and do not truly ſee or underſtand what they ſee.

6. Since it is ſure, the event of things here in the world is that about which mens minds are moſt taken up; and we ſee what preſſing deſire there is to know the tranſactions of the time, and what is falling out in the earth, though it be nothing of their perſonal concernments. Oh! how ſtrange is this, that the great events of the ſcripture that are of ſuch high import for a more full aſſurance of the Lord's being God, the certainty of his truth, and of that unconceivable glory in heaven with him for ever; theſe go by us with almoſt no inquiry or regard. Here is inded a matter of aſtoniſhment, how men read the Bible, do profeſſedly own it, yet nothing preſſed in their ſpirit to know if ſuch marvelous things as are there, do really fall out in the event, whilſt ſuch are of neareſt concernment, and offer themſelves to every ones trial by experience, ſo that none need take them on truſt.

Having premiſed theſe things for giving ſome light to the preſent ſubject, I ſhall here ſum up what in this following diſcourſe is further intended in theſe four particulars: 1. Theſe clear and undeniable inſtances we now have before us of ſuch events of the written word, where the immediate appearance of God, and a power above natural cauſes in bringing them forth is ſo clearly witneſſed, that we may ſee things no leſs great and wonderful at this day wait the church to confirm the truth, than any extraordinary miracles that in former times were known. 2. The import of this demonſtration, with that marvelous light which thence breaks up would be ſeriouſly conſidered, that lets us ſee, there are higher degrees of aſſurance and eſtabliſhment about the certainty of the ſcripture to be reached, than ſeems by moſt chriſtians to be underſtood; for which beſide the cleareſt evidences of reaſon, ſuch a demonſtration is given to our ſenſe of the truth, and theſe great advantages laid to our hand for believing, that might make our adventuring thereon as clear and comfortable a way, yea with that full ſecurity to ſatisfy the ſoul, as the way of ſenſe and feeling could do. 3. Whence it is, that chriſtians aſſurance and ſolid confirmation about the truth is ſo little proportioned to the greatneſs of the ſeal and atteſtation thereof that is before us. Its objective evidence ſo large and marvelous a thing, while that ſubjective certainty within the ſoul, which this calls for, is ſo little underſtood. 4. How excellent an uſe and improvement of this ſubject might be made, I intend here alſo to touch.

CHAP. II.

FOR the firſt, it ſeems a ſtrange inadvertence, how ſuch events of the ſcripture are brought forth to the world, and this day viſible in our ſight, yet in ſuch an ordinary way looked on, yea as if we were more aſleep than waking; when if men quit not the uſe of reaſon, they cannot but ſee theſe both in the diſcovery and bringing forth thereof are above human reach; about which that great appeal *Elijah* made, 1 *Kings* xxi. 22. to an extraordinary anſwer from the Lord, when the people were halting betwixt two opinions, and he ſaid, *The God that anſwers by fire, let him be God,* may be here made uſe of, I may ſay, to a greater deciſion, and witneſs for the certainty of his word, that men would come and ſee, if he be not aſſuredly God, and this his undoubted truth and teſtimony, which hath ſo marvelous a birth and verification this day in our ſight, that all the *Magicians* in the earth could never counterfeit; yea, more fully demonſtrative of a divine ſupernatural power, than

than if we had ſo extraordinary a ſign, as that which was then given *Elijah* from heaven before all the people.

Sect. 1. Firſt, There is this rare *frame* and *contrivance* of the ſcripture, and what a fulneſs and perfection it hath, as it is the record it bears to it ſelf, *Pſalm* xix. 7. and cxix. 129. in which its truth ſo diſcernible in the event, that if mens eyes be not ſhut, here may be a continued cauſe for wondering ſet before them; ſuch, that amongſt the greateſt works of God under the ſun, and all created excellencies, there is none like this, nor can be until the written word give place to immediate viſion. O what a real miracle is the Bible, for ſuch is it in it ſelf, in its whole frame and contexture; that though it had no atteſtation elſe by the works of God, it might be an unanſwerable ſeal to its own truth. It is indeed ſtrange, ſo great a light ſhines, and ſurrounds men with its brightneſs and yet they are ſo little affected therewith; that ſuch a demonſtration of the glorious God, and a work which all may ſee is above human perfection, helps not more to cure the atheiſm of the world; who if they would but come near and conſider this great wonder, might clearly ſee: 1. That here is nothing wanting which the church now in the world hath need of, or could in an extraordinary way ſeek from heaven; and yet is there nothing redundant or ſuperfluous; the whole race of the ſaints, from the beginning to this day, could not have wiſhed it another thing than it is, though a latitude had been given them, which ſo anſwers all times and ages of the church, as if only framed for the preſent time. No chriſtian but this takes by the hand, and to all that is in their caſe is ſo ſuited, as if for them alone it were an immediate gift and meſſage from heaven. 2. This doth enligthen the whole work of God, and keeps exactly foot with each foot-ſtep of providence in the earth, which comprehends in its lap and boſom every event, ſmall and great, that in due ſeaſon is diſcloſed within time; no deep of Satan ſuch, that it doth not diſcover, nor is there a work of darkneſs hid from its light. The church never knew her hazard, but might find it was there ſeen and foretold; yea, the eternal counſels and decrees of heaven, and what is concluded there, which neither angels nor men could ſearch into, are here ſet open in our view; and that greateſt depth of election thus ſo far unvailed, and brought down before our eyes, that men can be no more ſure ſuch ſhall be ſaved, who are predeſtinate to life, were there acceſs to read their names in that ſecret roll of the decree, than from the ſcripture it is ſure ſuch are elect, and ſhall undoubtedly be ſaved, who have come to Jeſus Chriſt in the acceptation of the offer of the goſpel. 3. Let us come near, to look to this great wonder, that with ſuch a light diſcovers the whole creation, and lets us know, what ſuch a ſight and theſe marvelous things therein mean, which elſe ſhould be unintelligible, and as a dark maſs before us; this that draws by the vail, and ſhews that rare image of ſpiritual truth in theſe things that are obvious to our ſenſes; and how the inviſible things of God, his eternal power and godhead, are by things ſeen ſhewed forth; for thus is the great fabrick of nature diſcloſed in its original, its continued courſe, that indiſſoluble chain of ſecond cauſes, and how high a riſe it hath in their dependences, until they touch heaven, where all theſe links are faſt tyed to his unchangeable purpoſe; yea, thus is it by the written word, that the heavens and earth as two great volumes are ſpread forth, and made eaſy for men to read, ſo as without this bleſſed conduct, it is clear, no poſſible communion a chriſtian could have with himſelf, with the works of creation, with the daily occurrences of providence, or one chriſtian with another. 4. Here men may ſee that marvelous contexture and ſeries of truths, how none ſtands alone, but ſo linked with a mutual correſpondence to give light one to another,

ther, that each has its peculiar room and uſe for anſwering the whole frame, and not one pin there wrong placed, but all every-where uniform, and like it ſelf, amidſt ſo great a variety of matter, and diſtance of times, moſt wonderfully joined and knit by one corner ſtone Jeſus Chriſt, who is that bleſſed point in whom all its lines do meet, and as the ſoul which enlivens the whole body of the ſcripture. And it is ſure, on whatſoever part of ſcripture a miniſter preach, he does miſs the greateſt ſcope of that text, if it lead not into the goſpel, and his doctrine thence be not thus pointing with ſome clear tendency towards Jeſus Chriſt. O what a ſight is here, could it be truly underſtood what is before our eyes! 5. Thus we ſee, it is framed (which the Former of all things could only do) to correſpond with the inward man, and exerciſe an authority over the conſcience, and our moſt retired thoughts as well as our actings, and how this and this alone hath brought to light that marvelous and unknown paſſage betwixt the ſoul and inviſible world, to have in one moment ſo immediate a converſe with heaven, and from it, and thus to make its continual reſort there; yea, lets us ſee the way for ſo near a converſe with God, which we know by ſureſt experience to be ſuch as it is there revealed. 6. I muſt further add, what a peculiar weight and ſignificancy are the words of this great record found to have (I mean the original) by which the Holy Ghoſt hath choſen to convey the truth unto men, which no language, no human skill can expreſs to the full, or is able to give the ſenſe of that marvelous πάθος and life in expreſſion, and of theſe idiotiſms there, but one age muſt ſtill leave it to another for further enquiry and ſearch.

Sect. 2. That great ſcripture-truth we ſee in the event, and the certainty of its taking place, which could never have entered in mens thoughts, if thus it had not been made known, that there is a *ſpiritual* and *new creation*, ſuch a rare ſtructure and workmanſhip, wherein the glory of God in his attributes doth more eminently ſhine forth, than in the being and frame of theſe viſible heavens and earth; here is indeed a great diſcovery, though theſe ordinary thoughts moſt have of it, may bring it in queſtion, that either this is but a romance, and not really believed, or our reaſon muſt be in a ſtrange ſleep, who know ſo little the weight and import of ſuch a truth. But queſtion this who will, it is ſure, ſuch as ever knew the reality of religion, can be of nothing more perſwaded than they are here: 1. That ſuch a truth they read in the Bible, and is expreſly there ſhewed forth, which nature never taught the world, but to this day ſhould have been a *terra incognita* without ſcripture-light; ſee *Eph.* i. 19. ii. 10. *Jam.* i. 18. 1 *Pet.* i. 23. Nor is it a dark view there given of ſuch a thing, but a moſt perfect idea and model of this workmanſhip to the leaſt pin thereof, which is thus ſet forth before us. 2. That as it is written and brought to light, ſo is it certainly found to be a truth. Here is no world in the moon, or the viſions of mens heads, but ſuch a creation do the ſaints know, and hath been their witneſs'd, ſince ſuch a ſeed was in the earth, upon as clear demonſtrative grounds as men can have of this viſible world they now are in; that the being and reality of grace and a ſpiritual life, theſe felt enjoyments of God, and his workings in the ſoul, are truths by experience found, and do exactly anſwer the pattern thereof which was ſent down from heaven, and exhibited to us in the Bible. Theſe know there is a living holineſs, which even to others may be as diſcernible as that there is a living man upon the earth; and a ſecond impreſſion which the law hath on the heart, as we ſee it with ink before us in the ſcripture. I know, to ſuch who have their ſoul ſunk in the earth, this may be as a night-dream. But do men debate there is a truth in theſe diſcoveries of *America*, when now for ſome ages, by ſo many thouſands who have been

been there, and have a continued trade with these parts, it is attested: Yet a greater witness to this truth, and its undoubted certainty is here, from the whole race of the saints, since the beginning of time to this day, whose record we know to be true, except we should deny there is a sun when we see it with its own light. 3. It is sure, here is an immediate influence from heaven, and its continued necessity to conserve this blessed creation, as discernible as that of the influence of the heavens on the earth; nor can the parched ground more need the falling down of rain, than this is found to have of a new watering to cause it to spring. 4. Thus it is known, there is another air to breath in, than what is suited to our natural life; and another sun than that in the firmament, to convey both light and heat to the soul; yea, a being brought near, and laid under these warming beams; and indeed such a blessed aprication, as men can know in the most hot reflex of the summers-sun; and that here also are over-cloudings and dark hours, as discernible as it is sure that the earth hath her night and cloudy times. 5. This is such a creation, where as obvious a contexture and consent there is in all its parts, as we may see in this great fabrick of nature, yea, such where no *vacuum* or empty discontinuity can possibly be found.

Sect. 3. We see it verified, and before us in the event, which natural understanding could never know or comprehend, if it were not revealed in the scripture, that there is a *creating of the fruit of the lips*, *Isa.* lvii, 19. such a product and fruit of the gospel by the ministry of men to be found, that is no less wonderful and demonstrative of an immediate divine power, than to create and give things a being by the word out of nothing. Here is indeed an astonishing thing, which if a truth, it is then sure we see with our eyes a seal to the scripture that is beyond these miracles which in a more extraordinary way have been given to the church. Is it a human work? Or could it possibly be the fruit of mens lips, that brings forth such realities and wonderful effects in the earth? Could moral perswasion, or a sound of air and words (yea, where no previous matter to work on can be alledged) have that effect, which so visibly is above the reach of second causes? Now that this is a truth there is no demonstration in nature more evident; that the fruit of mens lips by the ministry of the gospel, is a creation indeed, I offer these undeniable instances: 1. What a power must it be, that can turn the word preached into a real act, and resolve what is as a transient sound into such an undoubted reality of life and feeling; yea, turns the word sown by the ministry of men, into vital principles within the soul, what a sight were it, to see some of the stones of the ground rise up at the speaking of some words in the visible appearance of men. Yet here certainly is something no less marvelous, were it understood. 2. To turn the *Pagan* world to be christian, and there-with a throwing-down of their temples, and abandoning that worship and profound veneration, which for so vast a space of time, the nations once had to their gods; yea, this by the word of the gospel, without might or power; Is it not truly such a thing as to bring a new world forth in our sight, and a creation indeed? It is true, many ages are past since this was; yet is it of such import, a revolution so famous and publick through the earth, and of that unanswerable evidence, that this day, as a new and continued wonder, it might be as still present in our sight. And can this possibly be forgot, what the known records of these times, which we have in our hands, continue to tell us; how strange a face some ages ago there was upon the world, and what a change (for which human reason could never find a cause) hath followed; that so long a rooted religion should be forced to disappear, and this by an unseen power with the gospel, that did not strive,

nor cry out. So as now, for many ages *Jupiter* is no more known, nor hath *Diana* her temple, or *Apollo* his oracles; but these found to be such gods as in *Elijah*'s time who could neither help nor plead their own cause, whilst their friends contended for them, nor could they be once awakened to appear for their interests. O what a continued miracle is this, that no distance of time can bring in debate, or alledge a possible deceit or imposture therein! 3. Is it not more than human, and the visible product of an immediate power from heaven, that awe and authority with the preached gospel, which is found on these who hate it, not only to beget a feigned subjection, but in truth and effect some subjecting of their conscience? for it is seen where no visible motive is, no hazard from without to influence such a thing, how many millions have such a force put on them by a power which themselves do not understand, to fear and regard that name, and thus pay homage to the gospel, in whose soul there is a real and inbred enmity thereto? this is a marvelous thing, what an awe and dread is put on most of the christian world, even upon their conscience, that would make them stand with an horror and trembling to abandon christianity, in whom a real hatred to the truth and power thereof is so discernible. 4. It is an unanswerable evidence, this can be no human work, but an immediate creation of God, which is in bringing forth the *fruit of the lips* by the ministry of men; that the greatest effects of the gospel in the world, hath in all ages had this known remark therewith, to be more found by the doctrine of the cross, and the plainess and simplicity of the truth, than by the wisdom of words, or the furthest perswasives of human eloquence; to witness, that it is not art, or the excitement of mens words, but there is an evidence and demonstration of the spirit, an elivening air and sound, that is most discernible from the words of these who are puffed up. And thus is it evident, that the kingdom of God is not in word, but power; and how the truth hath a self-evidencing light therewith, and that native lustre which no human invention ever could reach a painter may represent the lively colours of a flower to admiration, but no art can give forth its fragrancy and vital scent.

Sect. 4. How great a discovery of the truth of the scripture is this, which hath in all times been known by the saints in the event, as certainly as they know they live and breath in the air, That *it is God who worketh all their works in them, Isa.* xxvi. 12. I confess, one of the depths of religion is here, the world cannot reach, and these who pretend that freedom and command within their soul, which hath no dependance on a supernatural influence and power, will not know; but sure and known it is, that I must say, if the evidence and certainty such have, who are christians indeed, could be witnessed to others, and their experience resolved in words, as they know it in truth, the world would be then forced to see a debate about this is as strange as theirs who would question, if there be a truth in motion, or if day-light be a dream and delusion, or not. The soul is one of the rarest pieces of the whole creation of God; and it is here as a stage and theater, the greatest of his works are wrought, yea, such that a christian cannot but know to be his immediate working; which 1. He finds is so far above his own reach to bring forth, if he be not a great stranger to himself. 2. Such he finds by no moral arguments or the influence of outward means could possibly be effectuate; and how little, with the greatest abundance of these is oft to be found, of a power or effectual working thereby on the soul? 3. These he can clearly see whose work they are, by bringing them to that test of the written word for their trial. 4. They are such works as are not seen at a distance, but lie so near, that a christian can retire within himself, and there

have

have ſo clear and unanſwerable an evidence of a God-head and the truth of his word, that I muſt ſay, were this great demonſtration more purſued, of the Lord's coming near to men in his immediate working on their ſoul, with a deeper reflection thereon, ſuch a degree of aſſurance about the truth, might this way be reached, that even by moſt of ſerious chriſtians ſeems not to be ſuppoſed or ſought after; this is a price for wiſdom in our hand, that few know how to improve.

Having premiſed theſe, I ſhall here offer in ſome inſtances, how great a diſcovery the ſaints thus have of the Lord's being God, and the certainty of his truth, by that they know and ſee of his immediate work within their ſoul.

1. How oft he cauſeth a day-break of light and life, by a marvelous ſurpriſe to ariſe within, when nothing but darkneſs can be ſeen without, like a ſun-ſhine at midnight, is a truth not more truly promiſed to the upright than it is found, *Pſal.* cxii. 4.

2. His cauſing their peace to abound, when ſurrounded every-where with trouble and diſtreſs; for whence could ſuch a thing poſſibly be, if it were not from heaven, to rejoyce in tribulation, and find that which cauſeth them to take pleaſure in perſecution, in neceſſities, and reproach for Chriſt's ſake? *Joh.* xvi. 2. 2 *Cor.* ii. 9. yet this is known and experienced.

3. The reſtoring their ſoul by a preſent and ſenſible relief, when it hath been ready to fail, and give over, as under a *Deliquium*; which was *David's* witneſs, *Pſal.* xxiii. 3. Is it not found that if not immediately from above, no other way it could have come?

4. How there is a ſenſible impowering of a chriſtian in the inward man to wreſtle and follow hard after God, under ſoreſt preſſures from without, ſo that he knows the call to this in the word, is not more diſcernible than his being cauſed to approach by a felt influence, and power on the ſoul, *Pſal.* lxv. 4. how great a witneſs is thus to be had of the truth, and that ſurely the Lord is God?

5. Nothing can be more known than this is to the ſaints, that ſurpriſing influence which is oft on their faith to cauſe them hope on the word, and have a ſatisfied reſting thereon, without anxiety, which all their former eſſays could not do; yea, this, when no outward appearance hath given the leaſt advantage, but their difficulties on that hand ſeemed more to encreaſe; muſt not this be immediately from heaven, and above all natural cauſes? ſee *Pſal.* cxix. 49. and *Pſal.* cxlii. 3. what an account is there given.

6. It is ſure none of the ſaints but may know whoſe work it is, that in one moment can enlarge their ſoul, and put it a going with an eaſy and unconſtrained motion after their duty, who were before ſo ſenſibly clogged and fettered therein; and how marvelous a change *the blowing of ſuch a gale hath cauſed*; where nothing from any outward cauſe could be found for it; *e're ever I was aware my ſoul made me like the chariots of a willing people*, *Cant.* vi. 12.

7. It is no leſs diſcernible how the weight and preſſure of their burden is oft remarkably taken off, which was before like to ſink them, even when the burden lieth as ſore upon them from outward cauſes as ever, yea, nothing to lighten it that way, but finds there is *a ſtaying the rough wind, in the day of the eaſt-wind*, *Iſa.* xxvii. 8. and how in their near approach to him, ſuch a perſwaſion he can beget in their ſoul of a delivery which ſeemed moſt hopeleſs from any preſent appearance, that all anxiety, and diſquiet is then gone, and taken off their ſpirit.

8. Thus is he known to be God on the ſouls of his people, who can ſubject the will with its own conſent, to follow the dictate of an enlightned

underſtanding, and effectually determine it, which once no moral arguments or reaſon could do, ſo that the heart is as it were ſtollen and caught away, yet with a conſtraint, but ſuch as hath a moſt diſcernible congruity betwixt that drawing power, and their greateſt liberty, *Cant.* i. 4.

SECT. 5. Here is a wonderful thing, and a *moſt convincing ſeal to the truth, this day in our ſight*, if our eyes were but awake to regard it, *that the natural man cannot ſee, or perceive the things of God*, 1 *Cor.* ii. 14. How ſuch a darkneſs ſhould be: That the moſt ſearching ſpirits, who in the depths and ſubtilties of nature exceed the ordinary reach of men, yet here are blind, though they know it not, and whilſt they exerciſe their reaſon and judgment, about the truths of the goſpel, where ſo great a light ſhines forth, yet are theſe hid from their eyes, and they verily ſhut out from the Bible, even while they read it, ſo as they cannot ſee that which makes the ſimple wiſe. Oh what a thing ſhould this be were it underſtood! and how clear and demonſtrative an evidence is it of the truth, a darkneſs which doth no leſs confirm the ſcripture of God, than that marvelous light which ſhines therein to others. It is ſtrange how far men would go to ſee ſome extraordinary miracle wrought, or ſuch a place of the earth, in which the light did brightly ſhine, when at that preſent time, nothing but darkneſs were to be ſeen round about; but is not here ſomething no leſs marvelous, and undoubtedly ſure, which now is before us, if we could come near to ſee.

1. Though it were not ſhewed us in the written word, it is ſure and undeniable ſuch muſt be in the dark, let them pretend what they will, and do not really ſee nor underſtand, what in the ſcripture is moſt plain, who can on theſe rocks and precipices ſo confidently run, which would cauſe an unexpreſſible fear and horror, if they had that ſight thereof, which others have from the ſame truths, they ſeem to converſe with.

2. That there is a reality in this ſtrange darkneſs (though it is a dream to the world) is ſure, and known by chriſtian experience, not only at their firſt entry into a ſpiritual ſtate, what a marvelous light then breaks up, which they never underſtood before, or had the leaſt conception of; but in their after-walk what a ſight and diſcovery is to be had ſometimes of a ſcripture-truth, that if they would give all the world for it they cannot have at other times.

3. And is not this ſuch a darkneſs, whence it is demonſtratively clear, there muſt be a ſupernatural evidence and diſcovery of the Scripture, which from the light of reaſon and nature do not in degree, but in kind differ, as truly as the light of the ſun is from that of a candle.

4. Thus it is not the revealing of truths to us with the greateſt objective perſpicuity can enlighten, until once it be *revealed in us*. But though men have a natural faculty of underſtanding, and no want of light in the object, and *medium*, yet doth it ſhine in on ſuch a darkneſs that comprehends it not, nor can receive and diſcern ſpiritual things ſpiritually.

5. Here needs not only a faculty and habitual illumination, but a preſent actual irradiation of the mind therewith, and immediate diſpoſing of the ſoul to go forth and receive the truth, as it is repreſented in its true luſtre and beauty.

6. Thus we may clearly ſee there is ſuch a thing as a real evidence and perception of divine truth, and a ſeeing it with our eyes, that others only ſee in a map; with which there is alſo a transforming the Soul into the very things there contained, and a changing it into the ſpirituallity of the Word, which as it is there written forth unto us, we know and are ſure its record is true; and ſo is it found.

SECT.

SECT. 6. It is an undoubted event of the ſcripture where men *may ſee a witneſs to the truth, no leſs convincing*, than of the moſt extraordinary miracles, *that a ſpiritual ſeed ſhould be kept up in the earth*, which doth not fail or wear out, under all eſſays to ruin the ſame: but ſuch an excellent *ſpecies* of chriſtians in its kind as viſibly tranſmitted through all ages by a continued ſucceſſion as that of mankind. It is ſure this was promiſed to the church, *Iſa.* liii. 10. *Pſal.* lxxxix. 4, 29. and to this preſent time is it not ſeen how marvelouſly it hath taken place; yea, what an extraordinary appearance of God is there if theſe were rightly underſtood? 1. That human race can boaſt of no longer continuance in the earth, than this bleſſed ſeed can do; for for with *Adam's* fall did chriſtianiry firſt break up that to this day lives, yea, without interruption hath been perpetuated, not in a ſhadow, but in truth and reality; and ſince that time did the ſun never ſhine in ſo diſmal a day, when it could be ſaid, there were men in the earth, but no chriſtians, or that the church did die without an heir and off-ſpring. 2. How could this poſſibly be without an immediate power from heaven, where a continued war hath been on foot theſe five thouſand years and more to wear ſuch a ſeed out, whilſt we ſee what length of time can do in the world; and that a war without ceſſation, were it but for one age, could not fail in an ordinary way to depopulate, and wear out the moſt flouriſhing countries. 3. Such a war and enmity is this which thus hath been kept up, that as it is not againſt the godly ſo much, as that divine image they bear, and not chriſtians, but the truth of chriſtianity. 4. Which makes this wonder the greater, we ſee the party ſtated in the quarrel againſt ſuch a ſeed, is not ſpiritual wickedneſs only, or the united concurrence of men, but the very nature of man now depraved, and not an enmity, that is tranſient or taken up, but doth as naturally deſcend from one race to another, with in-bred principles, as it is for men to eat or ſleep; ſo that it may be ſaid human race doth not more naturally move to the preſerving its own kind, than to deſtroy this. 5. How far is this above nature, or the poſſibility of ſecond cauſes, when it is ſo clear, not one of that continued race of the ſaints, but muſt have a new life and being from heaven, elſe not at all; hath no human progenitors, but is the immediate off-ſpring of God, and no womb to bring forth ſuch a birth, but his eternal counſel and decree. One chriſtian cannot beget another, but it is as great and marvelous a work the bringing forth of the meaneſt of the ſaints to have ſuch a new ſtate and being, as to make a piece of red clay a living perſon. 6. Thus is there not a viſible diſcovery of the being of God, and certainty of the word, when it is ſo evident, the continued flux of time, and its changes cannot abate the power and efficacy of divine truth; but with each following age is ſo convincingly ſhewed forth, as can witneſs the goſpel does not ſpend its ſtrength through length of time, but is ſtill where-ever it comes, as a new gift to the world, which hath the fulneſs of a bleſſing therewith, even when from places, it wants not ſome fatal periods and judicial departure. 7. How great a wonder is here, if we could conſider what diſmal times have gone ſo oft over the church, and that impetuous torrent of error and atheiſm which hath threatned no leſs than at once to ſwallow up all ſerious religion amongſt men; ſo that the continuing of ſuch an intereſt this day in the earth, and that chriſtianity ſtill lives, yea, not in a ſhadow, but in truth, is truly no leſs marvelous than the preſerving mankind in the Ark when all fleſh periſhed, which by an immediate power from heaven was ſo viſibly then ſecured; aud ſuch that we may fear a ſelf-oblivion, and wearing out of human race will ſooner take place, than the failing of this excellent *ſpecies*.

Sect. 7. It is ſure, we ſee in the event, what the ſcripture only could reveal, and all may know to be no natural verity, That *ſuch an union there is in one ſpiritual nature, and an oneneſs in kind among the ſaints, as we know there is a certainty of the being of mankind*, and that agreement which in the ſame nature men have with other; a truth clearly held forth to us, 1 *Cor.* xii. 11. *Eph.* iv. 3. 2 *Pet.* i. 14. and its taking place ſo great a witneſs and demonſtration of the word, that I muſt ſay, were this underſtood might be more convincing, than if every day were to bring forth ſome extraordinary miracles before us. But for further clearing, let us conſider theſe two, 1. How it is ſure, there is a reality in this, and that it may be as evidently ſeen as we read it in the Bible. 2. Of what great import this is, for a more full perſwaſion upon our ſoul of the truth.

As to the firſt, they muſt ſhut their eyes (I mean ſuch as know any thing of the power of religion) if they know not theſe undeniable evidences of its certainty: 1. That there is one ſpiritual taſte and ſavour of the things of God, which every where and in all times is known by the ſaints, though it be not in the ſame vigour at every time, but from the prevalence of the fleſh hath oft a ſenſible abatement and wearing out; yet is a truth, by experience ſo witneſſed, that to ſuch who are chriſtians indeed, and partakers of a new nature, this may be called *proprium quarto modo*. 2. When in any vigour that nature exerts it ſelf, is not ſuch a ſympathy alſo found with it, that all may ſee no outward intereſts or human ties have had weight to influence the ſame; but where grace doth remarkably ſhine in one, it will help to excite and draw it forth in another, with as real a ſympathy as can be found on the neareſt ties and union in nature. 3. Is there not a particular ſuiting of the ſame means every where to ſuch a nature, as praying, meditation, hearing of the word, *&c.* ſo as no change of climate, and no place in the earth ſo remote, where there is a real chriſtian, but theſe do as naturally anſwer thereto, as our daily bread can do to this body? yea, here alſo are the ſame oppoſites (which to this bleſſed nature are deſtructive) no leſs diſcernible. 4. And are not the ſame effects and characteriſtical operations of ſuch a nature through all ages known among the ſaints? that as it is eaſy to diſcern a man by ſigns and marks peculiar to his kind from a beaſt, it is clear, there are alſo breathings after God, and ſoul converſe with him, that are as inſeparably annexed to a real chriſtian; yea, but one center here where all the ſtirrings and beating of this ſpiritual life do as natively tend as the ſparks fly upward. 5. It is clear, what ever difference is in the way and manner of the conveyance of grace to a chriſtian's ſoul, yet there is but one ſpring and original of ſuch a new nature; and how this is no moral perſwaſion or any external cauſe, but is found to be an immediate power from heaven, by the revealed goſpel, which in all of that kind doth beget the ſame image and reſemblance of the ſecond *Adam*, as truly as that of the firſt is to be found in his off-ſpring. 6. Here alſo is a marvelous oneneſs in experience of the truth, to which none of the ſaints through the earth can be a ſtranger; how quickning, ſtrengthning, and refreſhing influences are certainly let forth by the word in their ſerious following duty.

Now as theſe are demonſtratively clear, let us conſider of how great weight and import ſuch a truth is, if our thoughts could be more ſtayed thereon: 1. To witneſs the reality of godlineſs, and that the being of a chriſtian is no more a ſhadow, than the being of a living man. 2. That this can be no tranſient diſpoſition, which the times, the temperament of the body, or outward cauſes might influence; but the reality of a new creature, which riſeth further above the nature of man, than it in its higheſt elevation is above the nature of beaſts. 3. Thus we may ſee, whatever differences are amongſt the

the truly godly, to which their corruption, darkneſs of mind, and contrariety of natural diſpoſitions is oft found to give a ſad riſe, yet theſe can no way reach ſerious godlineſs a blow; it being clear ſuch a new nature is, where they all meet with a marvelous oneneſs and correſpond in the ſpecifick properties of a chriſtian. 4. Thus they can know and diſcern their own kind, are mutually diſcloſed to other, by ſo near an intercourſe of their ſouls, that if ſuch a ſurpriſe were, for one chriſtian to find another in ſome remote part of the world, to whom the Lord in ſome extraordinary way had revealed himſelf, and had never known what converſe with any ſuch was; O what a natural warming one to another, and feeling intercourſe ſhould there be found upon this mutual diſcovery, even as the meeting of two men in a land inhabited only by beaſts would cauſe to ſee their own kind.

Sect. 8. How wonderful an event of the ſcripture, which yet in all times is ſo certainly known, are theſe contrary effects the goſpel hath on men, when to ſome it is a *ſavour of death*, that is a *ſavour of life* unto others, 2 *Cor.* ii. 14, 15. *Act* xxviii. 24. for it is ſure no natural cauſe, nor the influence of outward inſtruments can in this ſtrange thing be alledged, that men exerciſing reaſon, who have the ſame inbred fears and hopes of things eternal, and by nature alike paſſions with others, yea, have ſouls in the ſame capacity to be wrought on by moral inducements, ſhould by the very ſame means be ſo differently influenced to ſuch contrary effects, that whereat one ſtumbles, others are ſaved and ſtrengthned; one made further dead, and become as a ſtone, by that means which begets tenderneſs and weeping in others; yea, one made to tremble, and his joints to ſhake at the word, while they who are below them in a natural courage are not at all moved; but wonders what ſhould affright them by ſuch a ſound; Thus alſo is it, that ſome are made to hear a voice beyond words, *& ſine ſtrepitu ſyllabarum*, which is ſurely known upon his ſoul to be his beloved's voice, while theſe who ſit by, can diſcern no ſuch thing. O what is this? which if it were known aright, I muſt ſay is as viſible and immediate an appearance of God, as the working of any miracle that ever was, when here men may convincingly ſee, 1. How it is not of him that willeth or runneth, but there is a divine breath and air that is from heaven immediately, while at the ſame time it goes by others unperceived. 2. That here none are maſters of their own motion, nor can any previous diſpoſition from nature be alledged to give the word of the goſpel an advantage upon ſome more than others; and it is ſure no human reaſon can find a cauſe for it from without, why ſuch a mean at the very ſame time ſhould beget love in ſome and hatred in others, that when to the world the opening up of divine truth is fooliſhneſs, others ſhould be then ſtruck with amazement at ſo great a diſcovery of the wiſdom of God there. 3. Is it not ſeen alſo, how ſurpriſing and unexpected this oft is found to be, that the more rude and ſtubborn in their nature are ſo remarkably oft influenced by the word, while on theſe who are more poliſhed and refined, there is no ſuch ſtirring. 4. And may it not be eaſy to ſee the truth of an innate quality; whence ſome feed and ſuck honey from the ſame mean out of which others draw forth poiſon; and though no perſwaſions of men can take off that inbred averſion to ſpiritual things, or change ſuch an impoiſoned nature, yet is there a divine power found to do this.

Sect. 9. It is a great event of the ſcripture, *where we may ſee the truth near, and a viſible demonſtration of God before our eyes in theſe ſpiritual gifts given under the New Teſtament to the church, and for her uſe*; which as it is expreſly held forth to us, *Pſal.* lxviii. 18. 1 *Cor.* xii. 14. ſo is its taking place clear and undeniable even before the world this day, when ſo

immediate a witneſs from heaven to the truth and Ordinances of the goſpel, as might force a conviction on the greateſt atheiſts of the being of God, and certainty of his word. Theſe are ſo manifeſt, 1. How ſuch ſpiritual gifts are not ſimply acquired, but they are given; which by no skill or means could be attained, if there were not an immediate convey from above, though this doth not juſtle with that commanded uſe of means for their further improvement. 2. That theſe are ſuch as men may ſee have no dependance or neceſſary connexion with gifts meerly natural; but the moſt excellent endowments of nature, if alone, are found to be a poor ſhadow to ſerve the church, and that they are not ſuited for ſuch an end, th ough of ſingular uſe in their own place. 3. Theſe are gifts that we ſee do not ceaſe or wear out, where there is a divine miſſion, and where-ever the church is a building; but when once there is a judicial time, upon ſome particular church, it may be then eaſy to diſcern how both gifts and grace are a going, and a gradual departure both of light and heat. 4. And are they not ſuch with which the world is forced to ſee a marvelous energy and power for their enlivening, yea, ſomething of a ſpiritual air and breath, and another ſavour and evidence, to witneſs theſe gifts are not only given, but the uſe and exerciſe thereof muſt have an immediate intercourſe with heaven, and that ſurely there is ſomething beyond words or the reach of all human invention in bringing forth the truth, even a ſupernatural influence, that the moſt eminently ſpiritual miniſter hath not to diſpoſe of at his pleaſure; but I muſt ſay, the with-drawing of this ſometimes may be as ſtrengthning a remark, and of no leſs uſe to edifie the church, than the moſt diſcernible enlargements at other times. 5. As a more viſible acceſſion of theſe gifts now to the church in the times of the *New Teſtament*, is clear; yea, how theſe are then ſuited for the uſe and ſervice of ſuch a time, that it is ſure, no remarkable exigence of the church did need a ſpiritual gift, but it was found, and ſome called forth, the hand of the Lord being ſtrong upon them for ſuch an end. It is indeed ſtrange among other great evidences of the truth, that this ſhould not be more convincing, and how moſt paſs it with ſuch ordinary thoughts, that 1. Is ſo clear and demonſtrative an evidence, that the church's head does aſſuredly live, whom though we ſee not, yet cannot but ſee a real and effectual communication he hath with his body upon earth, as we are ſure there is a ſun that ſhines in the firmament, when there is ſo ſenſible a diffuſion of light and heat from it. 2. Thus is there a viſible witneſs from heaven to that marvelous erection of the church here, with its peculiar offices and ſervice, as it is a politick body, and that the authority and extract of a ſtanding miniſtry under the goſpel is not only from above, but thence alſo are its continued furniture and endowments, by a very immediate intercourſe. 3. Thus we may have a great diſcovery of the Lord's being God. I have oft thought, a ſerious and faithful miniſter of Chriſt, who knows in following his work, what near converſe with his maſter, and a cloſe immediate dependance on him is in the exerciſe of theſe gifts; hath a peculiar advantage, for ſome rare and ſingular confirmations of the truth upon his ſoul, which are much hid from others; and though theſe who look on at a diſtance, cannot know ſuch immediate approaches of the Lord, and marvelous impreſſions as theſe left on their ſoul, when brought near to him, or what may be betwixt a ſerious humble miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt and his maſter; yet is there not ſome glance of ſuch a thing, and a waffe as it were of the glorious God doth go by to the diſcerning of others, as will force this conviction; here muſt be ſomething more than human; and that a near and real intercourſe betwixt heaven and men upon earth is no empty ſhow.

Sect. 10. Is it not an undeniable event of the ſcripture, when the immediate appearance of God, and of a power above nature can only be ſeen to bring it forth: *Theſe more ſolemn times, and high-ſpring-tides of the power and efficacy of the word, which are found to accompany the preached goſpel,* as the breaking in of a flood, that hath a force therewith which nothing then can reſiſt; we know ſuch a thing is clear from the ſcripture, that ſo great and effectual a door is ſometimes opened to the church, 2 *Cor.* ii. 12, 19. 1 *Theſ.* i. 5. and it is ſure this is known and witneſſed to the world, not only with the firſt times of the goſpel, but in theſe laſt ages; ſo as it may be ſeen, the ſun doth not more certainly return in the ſpring and ſummer to the earth, than that ſuch great revolutions have their time alſo of falling in with the church, ſuch that all may ſee, 1. Muſt be an immediate divine power, that can ſhut the church's womb, and open it, yea bring forth ſuch a wonder before our eyes, as is, *Iſaiah* lxvi. 7, 8. *that a nation ſhould be born at once, and for the earth to bring forth in one day.* 2. Such times as clearly ſhew this is the very finger of God, by that ſwift diſpatch, the work of the goſpel then hath when a few days or years are ſeen to bring in more to the church, than ſometimes hath been the product of an age; what ſtupendious, and full draughts are in this day of the power of the goſpel, yea how inſtruments are then viſibly acted forth above their ordinary reach. 3. Whoſe work this is, all may know, which is ſo clear to have no dependence on men, on their painfulneſs, or that advantage of the moſt excellent natural endowments, but ſuch a marvelous encreaſe is thus found to the church, when it is ſo diſcernible at other times, how the moſt choice and eminent inſtruments are oft put to caſt out the net with ſore toil and labour, and catch nothing, the tyde being once ſpent and gone, and it is clear from no appearances of nature or reaſon could this be inferred, to ſhew it is above the reach of all the diviners in the world, where the ſtars and their conjunction can have no influence. 2. Beſide the real effects then of the goſpel may it not be eaſy to ſee an unuſual brightneſs and heat go forth with ſuch times, theſe glances of a divine power and majeſty with the ordinances, as cauſeth amazement; and how then the truth gets ſuch acceptation, that miniſters will be in more hazard from the over-ſtretching of their hearers love and reſpect, than from contempt. 5. To witneſs here is a work viſibly above nature, and the power of ſecond cauſes, is not the opening of ſuch an effectual door, and greateſt oppoſition from men, moſt uſually found to meet; and how ſuch a marvelous income by the goſpel, when leaſt of outward incitements are to be a bate. But a time of many falling off and ſtumbling at the trouble and reproach which attend the truth, is oft ſeen to be the time of bringing others forward, yea with that ſtrong affection and deſire, which nothing but the ſight of an inviſible God, and an immediate power on the ſoul could do; this is no romance or fiction, but is a ſeal, and witneſs from heaven to the truth, ſuch as the world cannot deny, that it muſt be his work, and his alone, who is able to ſubdue all *things to himſelf, when he thus doth rent the heavens and come down,* to make the mountains flow down at his preſence.

Sect. 11. Could we ſee or regard, what is before us, here is a viſible diſcovery of God, and of the certainty of his truth in his making out that promiſe; *Matt.* xii. 12. and 25. 29. *that unto every one who hath it ſhall be given;* how a remuneration and increaſe doth indeed follow the chriſtians work, and a vigorous activity to improve his little, as is there written forth, yea ſuch that may be clearly ſeen, is above all that mens endeavour and diligence in an ordinary way could have promiſed, but muſt be immediately from heaven, and as the undoubted effect of the promiſe. Now ſome few

convincing remarks of this truth, which hath been clearly witneſſed through all times of the church, I ſhall here offer. 1. How ſurpriſing an iſſue moſt hopeleſs eſſays at duty with foreſt wreſtlings oft have had to the chriſtians advantage, yea even to admiration, when they cannot but ſee, how difficulties were made the way to lead into their greateſt mercies, and that *better is the end of a thing than the beginning.* 2. That marvelous out-come the improvement of a little ſtrength for the church and ſervice of their generation is oft found to have, which though it doth not appear for many days, yet ſuch is it ſeen to be in the cloſe, that in no ordinary way, or from viſible appearances could have been expected. 3. How the ſeed was never loſt, which was ſown to the ſpirit, but in due time hath returned bringing the ſheaves with it, and that theſe do not loſe their work, but it is found ſtill to abide with an inexpreſſible comfort and joy thence where there is a doing for God, and a ſingle intending him in it. 4. That to *abound in the work of the Lord,* was never in vain, but in all times hath ſuch an increaſe as makes the difference betwixt them in the reaping, and thoſe who ſowed ſparingly moſt diſcernible. 5. That no lot or trial of a chriſtian was ever ſo ſad, but ſuch an improvement is to be made thereof, to make it a help to their joy, and let them ſee no providence can come in their way, but brings their mercy and up-making with it, if the work and duty, whereat it points, lye not behind. 6. Thus is it found alſo how the unſeen work of the ſaints in ſecret prayer, and doing for the Lord without the witneſs of men, wants not an open reward, and that a hid growth to the root, and under the ground ſhall be ſo far ſeen, that their profiting may appear to all men. 7. There is a giving which viſibly tends to enrich the giver; *and ſuch liberal devices, by which men are found to ſtand* with a greater income even to the diſcerning of the world, than all the exceſſive care and griping of others hath reaped. 8. Is it not clearly ſeen, how the drawing forth of the ſoul to feed the church, by ſuch as are called thereto, is the way to make themſelves fat; and in watering others, theſe alſo are watered. 9. How ſuch as have choſen affliction rather than ſin, in that day have found it given them to ſuffer with ſo preſent an income of ſtrength, as hath made it not to their own aſtoniſhment only, but of others alſo, eaſie and ſweet; the appearance whereof at a diſtance was ready to make them faint; yea thus it may be truly ſaid, that ſomething in the faith of the Martyrs for the truth hath been oft no leſs wonderful than in the faith of Miracles. 10. It is known, how ſtrengthening remarks and confirmations from the Lord of the truth, waits ſuch that ſeek them, and a ſerious reaching at leſſer things for this end hath greater added; and that mercies then want not ſomething confirming to their faith therewith, where it is looked after as the better part of their mercy. But to what a volume ſhould known inſtances of this truth amount; theſe few things are here only touched, to witneſs how great a diſcovery of God, and of his immediate appearance in bringing forth ſo marvelous a promiſe is before our eyes, that we may ſee no connexion in nature is more ſure and indiſſoluble, than that which is betwixt the chriſtian's work and his encreaſe; and amidſt theſe ſtrange uncertainties and diſappointments which are this day, how this doth not fail, that the fruit of righteouſneſs is ſtill peace, and he who ſoweth may ſow in hope; yea, ſuch a ſeen bleſſing is there on the loweſt ſize and meaſure of the labouring chriſtian, according to the promiſe, as to make their little grow, and bring up the laſt to be firſt.

Sect. 12. What the ſcripture only could ſhew, is it not a truth may be convincingly ſeen in the event, that even here there is *an immediate falling into the hand of the living God,* Heb. x. 31. And ſuch ſtrokes ſhewed forth

on men, which are evident to be above man's ſtrength to inflict, or his capacity to comprehend, if they were not foretold in the word. It is ſure, ſuch a ſeal the truth hath this day, and that theſe acts of divine judgment are ſeen to occur; for which no human knowledge by ſecond cauſes could find either the cauſe or the cure, but do with the very firſt view preſent the awful appearance of God, and conſtrains the conſcience to acknowledge his immediate hand, and how theſe can be no caſual adventure, but are a viſible out-making of the ſcripture. Some particular inſtances I ſhall here offer, which the world cannot bring under debate, they are ſo known and clear a witneſs to this truth.

1. As there is a great diverſity of influence and operation the Lord hath on the ſpirits of men; this may be a marvelous evidence thereof; a *ſtroke of infatuation* from his hand on mens counſel and judgment, where no viſible cauſe or previous defect of this could be alledged, but is ſuch that all may ſee is immediately from the Lord in verifying of this truth. Thus how ſtrange a faint and amazement at ordinary difficulties, a fatal precipitance in their motion without regard to circumſtances, the ſeaſon and opportunity of things is witneſſed, ſo as in the noon-day they cannot underſtand their way, but made to grope as in the darkeſt night. I am ſure the world can be no ſtranger to ſuch a ſight, nor to theſe remarks of an immediate divine hand therein, if they would but open their eyes. 1. That here cannot be ſome ſtrange accident in nature, when it is ſo clear an out-making of the ſcripture, and the very ſame wonder repeated which *Eſay* ſpeaks of *ch.* xxiv. 14. when *the wiſdom of the wiſe ſhould fail, and the counſel of the prudent be hid.* 2. Is ſuch a ſtroke, where a remarkable taking away that ſtaff on which they ſeemed moſt to lean may be then ſeen, that no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence. 3. A ſtroke that all muſt confeſs is above the influence or conjunction of the ſtars, and no product of natural cauſes, when not a perſon only, but a people this is ſeen to reach, and not the vile, but the honourable and ancient, to ſhew it is from the Lord of hoſts, *that the Princes of* Zoan *are fools, and her wiſe counſellors bruitiſh*, ſaith *Iſaiah, ch.* xxii. And there alſo is the reaſon given, why ſuch can neither ſee nor prevent what is ſo evidently before them, *becauſe he hath purpoſed it, and it muſt come to paſs.* 4. This remark alſo may be clear, of ſuch a ſtroke, how convincingly it falls in with the time of a people or nations judgment, and when ſome great change is drawing nigh. 5. And muſt not the world ſee a power here above them, who thus by an inviſible hand can give a ſtroke which none is able to cure, and make a people work their own ruin more than their adverſaries; to ſhew, that judgment hath many arrows in its quiver, and no counſel or wiſdom can be againſt the Lord.

2. Thus there is an immediate *falling into the hands of the living God* may be witneſſed, when the *ſcourge ſlays ſuddenly, and in a moment makes diſpatch, Job* ix. ſuch as an extraordinary plague and contagion, that brings quick deſolation therewith; ſome amazing fires, which as a lightening turns a city into a ruinous heap; ſuch alſo are theſe immediate ſtrokes of a divine hand on particular perſons, that admit no parley, but are done before e'er they be once apprehended; theſe are indeed prodigies of judgment, though from no age they are hid, which without a bruitiſh ſtupidity may be clearly ſeen to be no common or caſual occurrents, but a ſupernatural cauſality is there, and the immediate appearance of that God, in whoſe hand, as an adverſary, it is a terrible thing to fall, whoſe power can reach a city or nation, as well as a particular perſon.

3. To

3. To witneſs this truth, there is nothing more obvious than an immediate delivery of ſome unto Satan, and under his power for judgment, yea how viſible ſo ſtrange and amazing a ſtroke is to be from the Lord; when ſuch are then ſeen, 1. To blaſpheme and rage againſt him, when his hand is upon them, *Rev.* xvi. 11. 2. That a mans eyes *ſhould ſee his own deſtruction*, when yet he will not ceaſe to oppoſe himſelf to ſuch a divine power, even whilſt he finds it purſuing him, *Iſaiah* xxvi. 11. 3. This may be clearly known in that immediate power of the Devil over ſome to enforce their own aſſaſſination; for it is ſure, ſuch aſtoniſhing inſtances there are, where no *delirium* or want of reaſon could be alledged, and ſomething more than a violent inticement within made here obvious, like an immediate delivering of ſuch up to Satan as an executioner; and where, not only a violent hurrying and incitement thereto is then diſcernible, but ſo much may be ſeen from the ſtrange way it is brought about, as ſhews an actual concurrence of the Devil, and his hand is viſible at ſuch a work. This is indeed one of the ſtrange depths of the judgment of God, where men may ſee a malefactor is not more evidently delivered over to the ſtroke of juſtice, and put in the executioners hand, than ſome thus are given over to Satan to act ſuch a part upon them. *Achitophel* and *Judas* whoſe judgments were immediately from heaven, wanted not a burrier from hell to execute that ſentence; I know the choiceſt of the ſaints may be thus aſſaulted, for whom preventing grace hath oft marvelouſly appeared; yea, that ſome have been actually carried the length of ſuch horrid ſelf-aſſaſſination under a natural diſtemper, of whom otherwiſe we ſhould be very tender to judge. This only in ſuch ſtupendious inſtances is to ſhew how near and viſible approach of God oft is in ſome ſtrokes of his hand, and that *there is a ſtrange puniſhment to the workers of iniquity*, *Job* xxxi. 3.

4. Thus is there an immediate appearance of God, and his hand convincingly witneſſed in the *delivering up even ſome of the ſaints unto Satan for trial*; which not only may be ſeen in their outward ſtate by a ſtrange unuſual appointment of imbittering things, that then are at once found to meet to make a croſs ſharp, like a reacting of *Job's* caſe in ſome degree, and of that method the Devil uſed in that aſſault; but which is more ſtrange and moſt diſcerible, what is found on the ſoul by theſe horrid injections, and impetuous incitements within to blaſpheme, and to have thoughts here that are *horribilia de Deo, & terribilia de fide*; where it may be judged ſome of theſe motions, that the damned in hell continually have do there offer to infect the chriſtians ſoul; what an aſſault this might have been in that meſſenger of Satan *Paul* had to buffet him, the ſcripture does not particularly witneſs: but it is clear, *Job* was no ſtranger to theſe invenomed arrows, and ſome approach that way no leſs to his ſoul and the inward man, than his body was ſore and pained. Now in ſetting down this inſtance, I only intend to ſhew how ſuch a ſtrange trial by an extraordinary power and influence of the Devil there is, and certainly known to the ſaints, that may witneſs, how eaſie it is for the Lord to raiſe a ſtorm within, amidſt the greateſt peace and calm without, ſuch as all the world cannot make ſtill; and how ſore an immediate touch of his hand on the ſoul and conſcience is as well as the body, yea how then it may be clearly ſeen to be ſomething above natural cauſes. 1. In that horror and conſternation is therewith, to which no pain or torment in the fleſh can be compared. 2. That it is not a ſingular and rare inſtance, but in all times ſuch an aſſault have many of the ſaints had, though I know its ſuppoſed ſingularity makes it the more terrible to ſome. 3. That in the ſame way and method it is ſtill remarkably ſhaped. 4. Yea, where no

defect

defect of natural judgment and parts to influence such a thing can in the least be seen. 5. How visible a force this is from without, injecting that which can have no correspondence with their corruption within, but is such, that even corrupt nature is affrighted at. 6. Such that discernibly takes advantage and gains ground by fear, and flying before it. 7. I shall add but this, as these have their lucid intervals, in this case it is known also, how prayer and serious wrestling with God by the Mediator hath been still its best cure, and found more effectual here than all physicians, as being a wound from that hand which goes above all human reach and skill.

SECT. 13. One instance more I shall add, to what hath been held forth on this subject, how near an approach of that great truth is even here; and a begun discovery of the *state and condition of men beyond time*, that *there is a heaven and a hell after this life*, and death is not the last point to put a final period to a rational being. I confess this is one of the greatest objects of our faith, and whatever present thoughts we can now have thereof, yet such is that glorious estate above, and the horror of hell, as will be an unspeakable surprize to all who come there, and find that they never had a conception of before; but it is sure also that even here more may be witnessed to mens senses, with that demonstrative evidence of the truth, both of the one and the other, yea in some degree begun upon the earth, than most are aware of, or will let themselves know. It is strange how little this seems to be understood, and what distance we have in our thoughts, with the being, and reality of these great things, as if heaven and hell, were some abstract notions only, which lie hid in the scripture, and consider not what near and sensible approaches of both are here.

As to the first, that glorious state of the saints above, how marvelous a discovery is of this, and begun enjoyment thereof even here, when a christian so assuredly knows 1. in how large a measure the joy of his presence is let forth, the fulness whereof is this day in heaven, with these sensible embraces betwixt Jesus Christ and the soul, which are above all expression; and that this must certainly be some part of the pleasure above, which having no affinity with the flesh, brings in such serenity and calmness to the heart, and doth afford that solace and true delight which the whole earth could not do. 2. As it is sure, there is a clear and sensible perception of spiritual objects the saints have in this life, which to men by nature are as far above their reach, as the things of another world; is not something also here to be known of that glorified eye the redeemed have above, by that near capacity the pure in heart are put in to see God; which is more than seems to be believed. 3. It is known and sure, how marvelous transforming that is by grace of the soul, and in so far a removing its earthly quality, so as to make it even in this present state transparent, and pure in part, that the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ may shine in them. Yea thus what a discernible ripening there is and making such meet for that state above, by all these degrees of a christians growth here, whereby they are changed from glory to glory, which really is some kind of a begun translation of the saints to heaven, as there is a coming further up to that full stature of the man in Christ. 4. We know there is a near and immediate converse with God here sensibly enjoyed, which no words can make others know what the saints thus see and feel, as these near approaches to heaven this way; but such a certainty is found thereof, that no dying christian but with some confidence can say, though he change his place, yet will it not be a change of his company. 5. And is not something of this also discernible to others, how such oft have come forth with their face as it were shining, and a visible appearance upon them

of ſome near approach they have then had to the inviſible God, and another world, that may ſhew where they have been, and that the cauſe muſt be certain, when the effects thereof are ſo real. 6. It is known what high degrees of a triumphant joy even here are reached by the ſaints in following the Lord, and upon ſome ſpecial venture for him in doing or ſuffering, which is as it is then found upon their ſoul to be a joy unſpeakable, it may clearly ſhow there is more of heaven in real poſſeſſion than moſt do believe, though theſe get no leave to dwell and have ſettled abode in this hight, but muſt come down to ſwatter in the depths, and have their weeping hours over ſins, and the prevalence of their own corruption. 7. Is it not both ſeen and felt in the ordinances what a brightneſs ſome-times is therewith on the ſoul, and how piercing a ſound may be audibly heard there beyond words, with that ineffably ſweet and fragrant ſavour of his name, as ointment poured forth, which to a ſpiritual eye can bring ſuch an evidence of the truth of a heaven, as men can have of the being of the Sun, though under a cloud, by ſome rayes and beams breaking out thence, or by the firſt breakings up of the morning that it is ſure there muſt be a greater light to follow. 8. Are not theſe times oft here with a chriſtian, when no cloud is betwixt heaven and their ſoul; but ſuch a clear sky and brightneſs of God's face, with the ſenſible intimation of pardon, than which no audible voice from without could be more certainly heard, and then is the conſcience found to acquit when men were ready to condemn. 9. What does the ſtrong actings of deſire in the ſoul of a chriſtian witneſs? is it not to ſhew that native tendency theſe have to their original, and how they have not forgot the way home, for it is ſure that nothing which is come from above, can take up its beſt reſt here. 10. This cannot be poſſibly hid what marvelous tranſports of joy and delight have been oft witneſſed by ſome of the ſaints, in their moſt extreme ſufferings for the truth, who had life and ſenſe, and were fleſh and blood as well as others; that except men ſhut their eyes it might be eaſy to diſcern, theſe had got a ſight which could look them out of trouble and pain, and cauſe them rejoyce when there body was burning, and that it is ſure more of an actual poſſeſſion of heaven, and ſome fore-taſte of the glory there, is thus found under the ſaddeſt lot of a chriſtian, than was ever known, or conceived by ſuch as are at a diſtance. 11. How diſcernible may this be, even to the aſtoniſhment of by-ſtanders, that ſome of the ſaints dying on their bed have got up then to the ſight hill of heaven, ſo as all might perceive their ſoul raiſed when their body was moſt remarkably pulled down, and ſo far drawn by, that it might be clear ſuch with the opening of their priſon-door, had a light beyond it, and ſaw that which no words could expreſs. Oh if on-lookers knew or could conceive what by the eyes of ſome of the dying ſaints is then ſeen, it would make them long more to follow on. But this I muſt ſay it is a loſs to the church, that ſome of ſuch great and extraordinary glances given from the Lord at theſe times, and convincingly then witneſſed have not been more ſeriouſly regarded; now as a further witneſs to this I muſt add what the world cannot but know, how uſual it is for ſore wreſtlings, and bitter complaints to go before ſuch a bright Sun-ſhine to ſhew here can be no counterfeit.

I am the more preſſed to touch this ſubject, it is ſo ſtrange, the deep impreſſions of a *heaven*, and being for ever with God, are ſo rare on mens ſouls, when even upon the earth ſo ſenſible and near a correſpondence might be had therewith. Oh is our life in ſuch a continued throng, that there is no room, no time to be found with the hurry of other things, for chriſtians thus alone with themſelves to be at work, and preſs on their own heart, not only

only these great and marvelous discoveries of that glory to come, which are so clear and express in the word, but what near and demonstrative evidences even to our senses may be found here of the certainty thereof, if some deep reflections were on these things. 1. What can be more as a seal in our hand to quiet the soul about these great assurances of heaven we have in the scripture; than that continued witness before us of the certainty, and taking place of this blessed record, in all that concerns the church or any of the saints within time? yea, how clear it is, nothing hath failed hitherto of its truth, in the strangest things thereof, which seemed most contradicting to sense and reason. 2. It is sure, none knows the truth of holiness, whose alone witness to this is from without, and such they can only read in the Bible; but there is a *knowing without themselves*, and such an hid demonstration of the being and certainty of heaven to be found upon their soul; that though nothing is more clear and really felt, yet none can possibly impart what it is to others; nor could it be believed at a distance, or once enter into mens thoughts, what a sight some have here with these discoveries of the new name and white stone, even in the way of the word and promise, of that glorious state which is above. 3. What a sensible converse may these have with the truth and certainty of heaven, who know the real *being of spiritual things*? And as sure it is, the soul hath its senses as well as the body, not only to discern, but really partake of these enjoyments and delights, that can have no rise, nor in the least be influenced from any outward things; so thus a peculiar sweetness and delight, and most sensible pleasure is there oft found in things most bitter and grievous to the flesh, as clearly shews that undoubted correspondence which is here with a higher state and invisible world, and how marvelous a suiting there is of these objects to spiritual life and being; since it is sure the fountain-cause and spring-head must be real, whence an unspeakable joy is oft in so immediate a way let forth on the soul, when most separate and abstract from the body; and nothing of an outward cause for it; is not this demonstrative of such a joy to be here found, and its being no dream, which the scripture calls *full of glory*. 4. Hath not each christian to witness even to his senses, the truth of another world, and that blessed state above; a known and real tendency of grace in the soul to be still upward, after more near approaches to Jesus Christ, and a higher state than is here, which with as native a motion is found as the fire can move up to its proper place; yea, how sensible an interposition the flesh still causeth betwixt him and such glorious objects. So that heaven and this earth he cannot but see to be as two opposite points, like the *North* and *South* Pole, as the one goes up, so far is the other out of sight and account, so far is the other out of sight and estimation; and thus an higher ascent of the soul in more spirituality and abstractness from things seen, is as one leaving the shore, who the further he goes into the deep the land is less discerned. 4. It is sure such as know the truth of holiness cannot but see, what an advance each step of its further growth hath in a real assimilation in likeness to some higher state than is here; and that it is no shadow, but a drawing interest, and power, must be there, which can cause such strong emotions of love and desire to an unseen world; yea, that the body is as a prison to the soul, by its longings, and looking out to another place, whilst love hath taken so much of it already away, as can go, in this present condition, because mortality cannot enter immortality. 5. And is it not sure, and obvious to our senses, how real an intercourse and passage is here betwixt the soul of a christian and an invisible world, whether the continued haunts and resort of such do so much lye, where they drive so blessed a trade, and have most certain returns? it was not strange, that *Ja-*

cob's heart ſhould fail, the thing was ſo far above his faith, of *Joſeph*'s being ttuly alive; but when ſo viſible a confirmation by the ſight of the chariots and wagons was further given, though his wondering ceaſed not, yet did it cauſe his ſpirit revive.

SECT. 14. It is ſure alſo, the world cannot but ſee *there is an Hell*, which lyeth not ſo hid in the threatnings of the word, but is in ſome degree both felt and viſibly witneſſed here, and ſo far a begun poſſeſſion of its horror and torment, that the greateſt atheiſts may know it is a matter of earneſt, and no night-dream, if they did not hide themſelves from ſuch a ſight; now for this ſome undeniable evidences, even to mens ſenſe, of its reality, I offer, in a time when by moſt of this generation it ſeems to be looked on as a diſputable thing, and in ſo ordinary a way paſſed; yea amongſt the beſt theſe are ſo rare, who are found to work out their ſalvation with fear and trembling. 1. Is not this viſible, and in ſome degree begun here in theſe everlaſting ſtings and ſcorching flames which are there, by that horror of conſcience and inſufferable torment known in the caſe of many, as that of *Spira*, *Latomus*, yea with moſt remarkable inſtances of this kind in every age, where the world might ſee the truth of an *Hell* drawn as in a picture before their eyes, and how certainly this is begun not only in the pain of loſs, but in the very pain of ſenſe; ſo as even here ſome of the ſcrieches of the damned there, can be no hid or unknown thing to the world. 2. Is not hell and the truth of that horrid eſtate brought near mens eyes by theſe ſtrange effects which ſome begun degrees thereof could only cauſe, ſuch as to blaſpheme and rage againſt God, becauſe of his plagues, a fury and violence againſt the truth beyond the ordinary rate of mens natural enmity thereat, with that impetuous preſſure and incitement, which may be ſeen thereto; yea, hath not *Cain's* cry been heard from many, *my puniſhment is heavier than I can bear*; ſuch a ſudden breaking up of the conſcience, where nothing but ſtupidity was before, that hath made ſome ſeek to be rid of themſelves; as a deſperate eſſay to be rid of this, and others plung themſelves in ſenſuality to deaden the ſenſe of their pain and torment, by getting more near to the condition of beaſts. 3. Can it be hid from the world, or the moſt ordinary obſervers, what is ſo frequently obvious, how there is a coming within ſight of hell, by ſome here upon the near approach of death, that like the hand-writing on the wall to *Belſhazzar* cauſeth a terror and trembling ſenſe on them, beyond what they could have from a preſent diſſolution of nature. 4. Is there not ſomething of that faith the fallen angels have in hell, whoſe torment is to believe, and yet are conſtrained with terror thereto, viſibly witneſſed here? whereby many thus are haunted, whether they will or no, with the dread of God, who hate him, and their torment is from too great an evidence of the truth. 5. Can it be hid, how many of this generation, are ſo viſibly transformed into the image of the Devil, and turned as it were into the ſame kind, with theſe deſperate ſpirits, that human nature, though corrupt, would even dread at ſome acts of wickedneſs, and oppoſition to God, theſe are found to take pleaſure in. 6. And is not that aſſociation which is in hell with the Devil and his angels actually begun here, in ſo immediate a converſe with them, and explicite engaging in their ſervice, by many who for this end, renounce the very name and profeſſion of being chriſtians, which the world cannot poſſibly deny? yea for this cauſe I may ſay even theſe horrid wretches ſerve, and are a moſt confirming ſight before us to the truth, to let men know hell is no fable, when ſuch are found in the earth, and dwell among us, whoſe continued trade and intercourſe is with theſe powers of darkneſs. 7. It is known to be no dream or ſhadow, what frequent apparitions there are of the inhabi-

inhabitants of that place, theſe wicked ſpirits, and how much they haunt the world whoſe continued work is to incite men to wickedneſs, and oppoſe the kingdom of Chriſt, that it is ſtrange how little we are affected therewith, and ſhould not thence have ſome deeper reflection on the being and certainty of a hell. 8. So far is that after-ſtate made viſible here, by a delivering many up to ſuch aſtoniſhing obduration of mind, that to the conviction of all, they may be ſeen bound over in the priſon, and kept under chains, ſo as they cannot ſtir until death come to bring them to the rack; this is no rare ſight in the world, yet ſuch a *preludium* of hell, and ſo near a ſtep to it, that it may be clearly ſeen, ſuch a ſentence from the great judge, *depart from me*, is even here paſt, and made effectual, how they are put in the executioner's hand, ſhut out from means of their help, the ſcripture bound up and ſealed, from having any more acceſs to their ſoul; and thus no more to do, but to be carried from the goal to the final ſtroke. 9. There is a map and ſhadow of that eternal puniſhment the world may alſo ſee in ſome terrible acts of divine judgment within time, ſuch as have been publickly known, and a viſible hand from heaven therein on perſecutors of the truth, apoſtates, blaſphemers.

CHAP. III.

SOme great events of the holy ſcripture, are held forth in the preceeding chapter, to witneſs, what a ſeal this day is in our ſight, to the truth and faithfulneſs of God there; and hath in the darkeſt times of the church been remarkably continued before her, which I am ſure were they rightly looked on and brought near our thoughts, might be more demonſtrative of God, and the exceeding greatneſs of his power, than any extraordinary ſigns or miracles could be. I ſhall but touch three inſtances further, with ſome peculiar reſpect to theſe laſt times; which as they are clear and undeniable before us; they convincingly witneſs alſo of what ſingular uſe ſome of the moſt dark and aſtoniſhing depths of providence about the church in this preſent day are to confirm, and ſeal the ſcripture.

SECT. 1. Firſt we ſee a ſtroke *of judicial induration, and blindneſs of mind upon the Jews to this day continued*, after ſo great a light, and brightneſs of the goſpel; and when all poſſible grounds and props, they formerly leaned on are to their own conviction now made void, which is indeed one of the ſtrange wonders under the *New Teſtament* we have before us; but was not this foretold? and by the Holy Ghoſt ſhewed to the church, what we ſee, with the very firſt dawning of the goſpel, *Rom.* xi. 8. 12. 25. 2 *Cor.* iii. 14. And how ſuch a myſtery ſhould be underſtood, yea, the long continuance of that ſtroke made ſo clear, as to make it a further confirmation of the truth, ſince it is ſure that *blindneſs upon Iſrael* is concluded there, under a judicial arreſt, until the *fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in*; now if this were not before us in the *Bible*, could we poſſibly know or comprehend ſuch a thing, what ſo viſible a with-holding the very exerciſe of mens reaſon can mean, that they ſee not the light in the noon-day: But here is a darkneſs, for our further enlightning, and a ſtroke on them which might be of greateſt uſe to ſtrengthen us more in the truth, when that ſo ſtrange a vail is ſtill over their mind that they cannot ſee.

1. How the *Old Teſtament* is the very foundation of chriſtianity, and that there the goſpel, the greateſt ſecret, which from the boſom of the Father was ever revealed to men doth conſpicuouſly ſhine forth; whoſe brightneſs now under the *New Teſtament*, though it hath a greater light, yet is it no new light: for to him do *Moſes* and the prophets bear witneſs, ſo that you can-

not cite a more clear teſtimony from any of the Evangeliſts to the *Meſſia's* ſufferings, and the churches being redeemed that way than you may have, *Iſa.* liii. *Dan.* iv. *Jer.* xxiii. 5, 6. *Pſal.* xxii. 18.

2. Can men have their eyes open, and not ſee that the whole ſcheme and *œconomy* of the jewiſh ſervice, is a moſt clear ſhadow and idea of the goſpel, and how that dark body of their ceremonies and types, have thence only their light; for who could look on the ark, the mercy-ſeat, their paſſover, ſcape-goat, *&c.* and not diſcern ſome divine myſtery thus ſhadowed forth? That ſurely the blood of attonement, their ſin-offerings and ſacrifices, were not the true victim offered to God, but had a figurative relation to ſome other propitiatory ſacrifice on whom the ſins of men were actually laid.

3. What poſſibly can be more clear than this? That in the goſpel as the center all theſe ſhadows did meet, which do now ceaſe, their full end and accompliſhment being come; and if men look on that pattern, and frame of the jewiſh ſervice, can they ſee it, and not know the building it ſelf by it? And how exact a correſpondence is thus betwixt them, that in ſo ſtrange a multiplication of theſe figures and types, which were then of divine appointment; nothing is there inept, or uſeleſs, but had a peculiar uſe, and relation to ſomething in the goſpel; that as face anſwereth to face in the glaſs, one may ſee there is the ſhadow, and lo here the ſubſtance, where all is found, and that their light is now gone and extinguiſhed, becauſe the ſun it ſelf is riſen.

4. Men could hardly believe, if they did not ſee this with their eyes, with what veneration the *Jews* can admit the *Old Teſtament*, and yet deny the *Meſſiah* to be come. They know it is many ages paſt, ſince their fathers looked for him, and with greater expectations were awaked to ſuch an hope, near theſe times of the goſpel than they now are. They know *Daniel's* ſeventy weeks is a piece of cannonical ſcripture, which clearly takes in his coming, and though it were taken either for weeks or days, or of years, it muſt be long ſince expired, but if they ſhould mean weeks of ages, then for many thouſand years his coming could not be yet expected. How ſtrange a vail muſt this be on their mind? which may be no leſs obvious, than that they cover themſelves with, at the reading of the law.

But what a witneſs is here alſo to the truth, to ſilence atheiſm about the divinity of the ſcripture, if it were brought near our thoughts, that ſuch a nation, and race there is, and kept up to this day as a living witneſs to let the world ſee. 1. How unanſwerable an evidence this is to their ſenſes of the truth of that renowed kingdom, and church of *Iſrael*, to whom the oracles of God were committed, and once by a ſpecial mark of his favour ſeparated from the nations, (though now it is turned into a curſe) which to the conviction of all, even of the greateſt atheiſts, may ſhew it is no impoſture, or romance, which by the ſcripture is held forth; but ſuch a viſible witneſs there yet is of its truth, as men have of a flouriſhing city, when ſuch ruins are ſeen, as bear the evident marks of its former grandeur. 2. We cannot but ſee ſuch a people kept by themſelves, and not mixed with the nations, whoſe fathers from one generation to another did own and imbrace the *Old Teſtament* as the word of God; and which is demonſtratively clear, could not therein be inſtructed by the chriſtian church, whom with the greateſt oppoſition and malice they have ſtill purſued, to witneſs there is no poſſible colluſion, can be here. 3. Thus the world may ſee a people that are known enemies to the chriſtian faith; who yet confeſs, and own that doctrine, in which the truth and ſubſtance of chriſtianity is clearly ſhewed forth, and do fully acknowledge that truth of the *Meſſiah*, to redeem, and deliver

church, is the undoubted promiſe of God. 4. And is it not ſure ſuch are this day in our ſight, that once were an united and flouriſhing ſtate in their own land, whoſe ſtroak and judgment in its manner and continuance being now for 1500 years, is ſuch as no inſtance, preſent or paſt through the world, could ever be found to reſemble; but as a beacon on a high hill calls aloud to every age and time of the church, to enquire what means ſuch a ſtrange and amazing ſight as this of the *Jews*.

SECT. 2. The ſecond inſtance I here offer, to ſhew how great a witneſs to the truth, and the glorious being of God is in theſe laſt times before us; is, *that amazing ſtroak of induration on the Romiſh church*; ſo ſtrange a thing this is, after ſuch clear breaking up of the truth, how men can at once exerciſe reaſon and be popiſh; yea, in the matters of an eternal intereſt, that ſhould lie ſo near, to wreſtle with a light that ſo clearly ſhews, if the ſcripture be true they are undone, and for ever ruined. Here is one of the greateſt depths of the judgment of God in the earth; but expreſly foretold, 2 *Theſ.* ii. 11. That ſuch a deluſion muſt be, and *Rev.* xvi. 8, 9, 10. what entertainment the light was to meet with from this party, in a blaſpheming and further rage, inſtead of repenting; and that the darkning of their kingdom, ſhould make them gnaw their tongue with pain; but not ceaſe to oppoſe themſelves to the cleareſt evidence of the truth. We ſhould have thought it almoſt not poſſible for the *popiſh* intereſt to gain more ground by ſeduction, now after ſuch a ſhining forth of the goſpel, whatever advantage in former times it had, and in many parts yet hath, by fear and conſtraint; but this needs not be ſtrange, when atheiſm and ignorance are found ſo effectual to uſher it in, and hath a bait therewith ſo well ſuited to a licentious time: it is eaſy to quit the truth for them who never knew it, or the receiving of it in love: and the world may ſee, that ſuch who fall off to that way, are ingaged this day, not on debate, and from arguments to the judgment. Some particulars I ſhall here inſtance, which are known, and owned by the *Romiſh* church, and amongſt the moſt concerning articles of their faith, that all may ſee and conſider, how theſe poſſibly can ſuit with the ſerious exerciſe of reaſon and judgment, and their profeſſed owning the divinity of the ſcripture: if ſuch a judicial ſtroke as is there expreſly foretold, were not thus convincingly verified.

Firſt, That men muſt quit that judgment of diſcerning given them of God, and not truſt their own eyes, but others, in the great intereſt of ſalvation; yea, thus with their conſent be ſhut out from all proper knowledge of the ſcripture, and ſo far take the church-guides for the Bible, as on their teſtimony they muſt reſolve their faith, even whilſt they cannot but ſee the greateſt of theſe more ſwayed with the concernments of the earth than of heaven, and none more involved in its affairs than ſuch are; yea, when nothing is more expreſly contrary to the command of God both under the law, *Deut.* vi. 6, 7, 8, 9. and under the goſpel, *Joh.* v. 39. what an aſtoniſhing thing is this?

2. Is it not like a ſtroke of madneſs, to own a blind obedience to men amongſt the heights and excellencies of their faith, and account ignorance a part of religion in ſuch a world where deceit and falſhood are ſo much in faſhion; and thus in their ſouls concernments truſt theſe whoſe credit and teſtimony without ſome further ſurety they would fear to take for a ſum of money? Oh! what is this for men to adventure with their eyes ſhut in the great things of heaven and eternity, and yet not be ſtruck with ſome fear and jealouſy, yea, when ſo many thouſands, who are known to be rational and ſerious in their way, do ſolemnly declare what a contradiction the doctrine of their church is to the expreſs letter of the ſcripture, and therein offers an appeal to their own inquiry and trial if they will credit that bleſſed record, if

there

there it be not clearly found, they are deceived and ruined by their ſpiritual guides. Sure it is, that much leſs ground of ſuſpicion would cauſe ſuch to open their eyes to try the beſt ſecurities they have about any outward intereſt.

3. Is it not clear, that no ſuch ſlavery is exerceed on the bodies of the greateſt drudges under the *Turks*, as is here on mens ſouls, who ſee, and yet may not admit their own ſight of the plaineſs and perſpicuity of this ſcripture, nor this record it bears of it ſelf, that it is fitted to make the ſimple wiſe, were it never ſo clear and plain before them, but muſt take it from others on truſt, that the chriſtian faith held forth in the ſcripture, is not there held forth in intelligible words by the Holy Ghoſt, but a maſs of dead characters, without ſenſe, until their church-guides put a meaning on it; on which they muſt reſolve their faith, though they ſhould ſee it moſt croſs to its plain and genuine ſenſe, yea, while they are forced to confeſs, if they pretend no extraordinary revelation, that the ſpecial illumination of the ſpirit, by which the word is ſavingly underſtood, can from no private chriſtian be ſhut up, more than the greateſt doctors of the church.

4. How amazing a thing is it, to ſee how far men dare venture, where ſcarce a ſhadow or ſchool-problem can be found to take hold on, as to the great foundation of the *Romiſh* church, and of all that ſtructure of the primacy and infallibility of her head, which is an alledged preſidence of *Peter* amongſt the apoſtles, and ſome human traditions thereabout; for it is undeniable, this is the whole on which without further enquiry no leſs weight is laid over, than the intereſt and eternal ſaving or periſhing of many millions of ſouls, they and their children which are concerned therein; and it is ſure, if this preſidence of *Peter* fall, and have no ſolid ground in ſcripture, ſo that it be evinced, the rock on which the chriſtian church is built is Jeſus Chriſt, and not *Peter*; then ruſheth all the building down, with that high power and infallibility of the *Pope*, which muſt fall therewith; and if this fall and be found a cheat, then all his pardons and abſolutions founded on that plenary power on which ſo innumerable a multitude build their peace, and takes as their acquittance into eternity, are gone, and can do no good, yea, ſuch ruined and undone who have truſted their ſouls thereto; now who is there would adventure the ſmalleſt outward intereſt on ſuch a ground, where if men would but come to be in earneſt, nothing can be more clear than this from the ſcripture, that the power of the keys was given to the reſt of the apoſtles as well as to *Peter*, *Mat.* xviii. 18, 19. And that he did exerce no ſuch preſidence amongſt them, ſee *Act.* xv. Nor can the leaſt ſolid ground be to judge, he was ever at *Rome*, or had the leaſt peculiar tie thereto, beyond the reſt of the apoſtles.

5. As it is an horrid blaſphemy, and expreſly contrary to the ſcripture to join human tradition with it, and give the ſame authority thereto, to decide and ground the church's faith about the truth. It is a ſtrange contradiction to reaſon for men to ſuppoſe or lay weight on the infallibility of tradition, and clear uninterrupted delivery of the church's ſenſe on the written word this way, when they cannot but know, what oppoſition general Councils have had to others in the greateſt truths, the frequent juſtlings of the Fathers together; yea, is it poſſible tradition could be a ſure conveyance of the doctrine of the church, and its ſenſe on the ſcripture, when the whole chriſtian world was almoſt turned *Arians*, that there ſeemed to be but one *Athanaſius* left, and after that falling off to *Mahumetaniſm*, when ſuch times were that ſtars ſeemed to fall from heaven, and ſo many churches once famous, ſwallowed up under this black

black darkneſs; and it is ſure men cannot but ſee, how far a relation will vary and become unlike it ſelf, in a very ſhort time. Oh! what a ſtrange thing muſt deluſion be, and a judicial blindneſs of the mind?

6. Is not here a thing ſo groſly abſurd, that may tempt men to atheiſm, and queſtion the certainty of all truth? to hazard an eternal intereſt and ſatisfaction of divine juſtiee on ſome plenary indulgence given out of the church's treaſure, and this from a ſuppoſed over-plus of merit in ſome of the ſaints, who had more than enough for themſelves, though ſuch whom they muſt confeſs were ſinners when they were upon the earth, nor can deny that the ſcripture ſheweth, by one ſacrifice is the redemption of the elect church for ever made perfect. I confeſs, if it were a matter of ſmall moment, and ſome outward hazard only, men might ſport at ſo notable an impoſture; but oh! in a buſineſs of eternal ſalvation and condemnation, how ſad and deplorable a ſight is this?

7. But admitting ſuch ſtrange prineiples they own, can they poſſibly ſhun ſuch a diſcovery, at what an uncertainty their ſouls are thus ventured, or how any can be ſeeure, 1. If ſuch merits they lean on were indeed more than their own need, whoſe they are, did require. 2. Though ſuch an overplus were a truth, can they be ſure, in whoſe hand theſe were intruſted to diſpence, or what is their proper right or warrant to apply them, when for this, from the ſcripture, there is no ſhadow, and from them the world cannot poſſibly know. 2. How are they ſure, but by a long continued application, in ſo many thouſand plenary indulgences founded thereon, they may be already exhauſted, and loſt their wonted ſtrength; but oh! an anſwer to all theſe aſtoniſhing things is too evident, that a judicial ſtroke from the Lord is ſuch that no reaſon is able to cure.

8. This may be the more wonderful, when it is ſo elear, except men will ſhut their own eyes, that here is a lucrative intereſt, money for merit, as the procuring cauſe, for want of which the poor and friendleſs muſt periſh; and thus the high-way-robber, if he can ſave his neek, is ſure to have his ſoul ſafe, by giving ſome part of the purſe he hath taken to the prieſt. Thus no abſolute neceſſity for one to be religious and rich at once, who hath enough whereby to purchaſe the merit of others, and how to expiate all guilt, and ſecure his after-hazard by preſent money, and a liberal hand to the church.

9. How ſad and amazing a ſight is it, to ſee men ſo infatuate in the veneration of the reliques of the ſaints, and aſcribe ſueh efficacy thereto, both for ſpiritual and outward diſeaſes; when if they would open their eyes, there is ſuch manifeſt appearanee of deceit, that they know they muſt pay for their toil and reſpect to ſueh things to them who viſibly purſue their own gain that way, and can have no aſſurance, but ſuch may be bones of ſome malefactors, and that it be an impoſture rather than a miracle, how the milk of the Virgin *Mary* 1500 years, and the bones of the apoſtles ſhould be kept uncorrupted, when the atteſters thereof all may ſee, have that politiek intereſt of money for it, which in every time drives many thouſands not to deceive others only, but to ruin their own ſouls.

10. How ſtrange a contradiction is here for men to admit the morality of the firſt and ſeeond eommand, as the law of their God, and its being perpetually binding, which ſo expreſly ſays, *Thou ſhalt not bow down, nor worſhip the likeneſs of any thing*, &c. and yet both authoritatively determine and practice the contrary. It is ſure there, all adoration of the inviſible God, under a viſible repreſentation is moſt plainly forbidden; and that *Aaron*'s calf, and theſe at *Dan* and *Bethel*, though the worſhip thereof was intended for the true God, yet by him was found idolatry. But what ſubtilty of diſtinctions,

or of that reſpect pretended therein to the prototype, can make ones pillow ſoft on their death-bed, when they muſt inſtantly paſs in before his tribunal, whoſe law they have thus uſed.

11. As it is clearly repugnant to the ſcripture, how ſtrange a contradiction to reaſon is here? That there ſhould be a tranſubſtantiating of the bread and wine in the ſacrament into the real body and blood of Jeſus Chriſt; when 1. It can be no more a ſacrament, when turned into the thing ſignified. 2. Can the accidents, ſuch as colour, taſte, ſmell, poſſibly remain and exiſt without the ſubject. 3. Can one and the ſame numerical body, which is finite, be in the ſame moment of time in many thouſand places through the earth, remotely diſtant from other; yea, thus can there be a penetration of bodies, when all muſt confeſs, the nature of bodily ſubſtances is to be impenetrable. How ſad a ſight is it, for ſo many to reſign the liberty of their ſouls ſo far to others, that they muſt quit both ſenſe and reaſon at once, and may not ſearch the ſcripture to know what is held forth there.

12. Can it be ſuppoſed, ſuch are in earneſt, if there be not a judicial ſtroke on their judgment, to pray to one dead man, in the behalf of another? to theſe who cannot hear, for them who are paſt help? yea, that men ſhould be ſo far without fear and feeling, as to reckon a liberty to deſtroy themſelves ſome ſpecial advantage, and that a diſpenſation from the *Pope* for violating the expreſs law and command of God, will be enough to ſtand betwixt them and his avenging juſtice.

I ſhall further add but this one inſtance here (having ſome occaſion to give a more full account of their doctrine in the cloſe of this treatiſe) how ſtrange and amazing a thing is it, for men to plead, yea, ground their faith ſo much on an uninterrupted ſucceſſion in their church; when yet they expreſly hold a nullity both of baptiſm and ordination, if the intention of the prieſt ſtand not right thereto; and that this is eſſentially neceſſary for it; for thus how ſhall the world know, but moſt of their Popes and clergy be both without baptiſm, and ſtill laicks without ordination; and ſo no poſſible acceſs for the church to know either the certainty of ſucceſſion, or infallibility of a judge.

Theſe few particulars I have only inſtanced of the doctrine, and known tenets of the *Romiſh* church, to witneſs how convincing a ſeal this is to the ſcripture, in ſo ſtrong a deluſion, theſe are viſibly given up to, for which I do appeal their conſcience, and that confeſſion themſelves make to the world, if any thing contrary to theſe principles they publickly own and admit be here charged upon them. It is a ſight I confeſs ſhould be ſad, to ſee ſo great a darkning of the truth, and ſo much of the chriſtian world periſh, and will not once open their eyes; but it is well, ſuch a clear diſcovery is here alſo, which on another account calls to rejoice, and be more ſtrengthned in the way of the Lord, that we know ſuch a party is this day in the earth, and before us, whoſe being, appearance, and theſe advantages they now boaſt of are ſo undeniable a witneſs to the truth, if we conſider theſe things. 1. There is ſuch a piece of the ſcripture, that fore-tells the man of ſin, the manner of his approach, with the whole deſtiny of his reign and fall, which muſt needs take place, and have an application to ſome particular party, except we quit all certainty of divine truth, for if one line, or one ſyllable of this ſhould fail, we were undone, and our ſecurity in the greateſt intereſt broken, ſince the faithfulneſs of God ſtands good for every part of his word as well as the whole. 2 It is clear, this picture was drawn by the Holy Ghoſt, of ſuch an adverſary, now a thouſand five hundred years paſt, what ſhould be his form and ſhape, the way of his appearance, with his true proportion and lineaments. 3. Except we deny our ſenſes, it is certain, that ſuch we ſee with our eyes,

as

as are there ſhewed forth, ſo as none ever knew more clearly the face of a man, by ſeeing his picture exquiſitely done, and to the life, in a frame, than the church this day may know the Antichriſt, and find him out. I ſuppoſe one in ſome remote part of the earth were brought to underſtand the ſcriptures, and in his enquiry there, were aſtoniſhed with theſe diſcoveries he finds of ſo ſtrange an adverſary, with an earneſt deſire to know if he hath been yet made known to the world, let him have a true and particular account of the *Romiſh* church in its complex frame and ſtate, in its duration, the way of their rule, and in how different a mould it is caſt from all the kingdoms of the world, his own eyes and reaſon, though nothing from others were told, might ſhew how clear and exact a reſemblance is to be found there to that map, and diſcovery, which with amazement he had before ſeen, and read in the Bible. 4. Is it not to admiration now obvious, how many ages paſt, theſe were fore-told about this adverſary, as they are this day before us in the event, when not the leaſt ſhadow or appearance of ſuch future emergencies was to be ſeen, or could have entred into mens thoughts, to ſhew this, only from the Holy Ghoſt could have been revealed to the church, to whom all his works are known from the beginning. 5. Where were we if ſuch a ſight were not this day, as the *Romiſh* church, what now it is, and in former ages hath been, and how ſore a daſh and cruſhing ſhould it be to the faith of the ſaints, to cauſe a queſtioning of the whole ſcripture, when ſuch concerning propheſies that reſpect moſt of the times of the *New Teſtament* have no being in the event, nor now poſſibly could have; for according to the word it is clear, this great adverſary in his riſe muſt begin with the very firſt times of the church under the *New Teſtament*, and his continuance ſuch, that the laſt ſtroke, and his being utterly aboliſhed is to be one of the neareſt preſages of the ſecond coming of the Lord.

Sect. 3. There is one great event of the ſcripture I ſhall further add, which in ſo dark a day might preſs a more ſerious enquiry and obſervation thereof, to ſee how this anſwers the promiſe, when ſo obvious and ſenſible a contradiction ſeems none to it; *that a more flouriſhing ſtate of the church ſhould be in theſe laſt times on the ruins and down-fall of Antichriſt's kingdom, which cannot go back under all theſe aſſaults and oppoſitions of men, but is ſuch that the one intereſt muſt advance, and the other further decline.* This is a truth we know the Lord hath enſured by his faithfulneſs, 2 *Theſ.* ii. 8. *Rev.* xvii. 13. 16. compared with xx. 1, 2, 3, 4. which does ſo evidently co-temporate therewith; to which alſo many propheſies that concern the ſtate of the church in the latter days bear a moſt clear witneſs that the moſt eminent appearances of God, the greateſt enlargement, and of the longeſt continuance, that his church ſhould have under the *New Teſtament* to meet ſuch a period of time, and then ſhould her ſpring begin, after a long and ſharp winter, that went before; it is clear alſo, that the time of the promiſe is certainly come, which cauſeth great thoughts of heart unto many, whilſt ſo much preſent ſenſe ſeems to ſpeak a viſible contradiction thereto; for it cannot be denied, that the Lord's work about the Reformed church looks now every where to be a work of judgment, we ſee ſearching trials, ſome amazing depths and intricacies of providence, how ſtrange a meeting there is this day of contrary tides that ſeem to drive moſt back, and on every hand to bring in difficulties, yea, ſuch a preſent darkneſs and faint almoſt on all, as former times of the church did not know, but to witneſs the certainty of the promiſe, that the world may ſee the God of the Reformed church doth ſtill own that intereſt, and this his word, who is faithful and true, yea, that nothing is here; but what may ſtrengthen more than ſhake; theſe things I offer to be ſeriouſly conſidered.

Firſt, when ſuch a preſent darkneſs is, is it not known alſo? how bright a day did go before this, and what an immediate appearance of God by moſt ſtupendious providences then was to reſcue his truth and people from the power of Antichriſt, ſo that though our night ſhould be more dark, none can queſtion ſuch a ſeal, which before the ſun, to the amazement, and conviction of the world, with ſo full a witneſs and aſſurance on the ſpirits of his people, yea, I muſt ſay with extraordinary ſigns and confirmations from himſelf, he hath put to the cauſe of the Reformed church.

2. It is known in every ſtep of the church's riſing, that whatever inſtruments in an ordinary way could promiſe, yet ſomething far above this both in their calling forth and excitement, and actings hath been clearly witneſſed, to ſhew that immediate holding from heaven, and by an extraordinary divine power, for verifying of the promiſe the Reformed church hath of her poſſeſſion and intereſt?

3. Is it not eaſy this day to ſee ſo ſad and diſmal an hour now upon the church is not more obvious than the provoking cauſe, and the righteouſneſs of God no leſs clear therein than the cloud is dark, for I muſt ſay, theſe many years paſt who could have their eyes about them, and not fear upon ſo viſible a departure from the truth, and falling off from love, tenderneſs, and the power of religion, through all the Reformed churches, but that either the ſcripture ſhould fail, and want its accompliſhment, or ſome remarkable ſtroke was near; yea, that a ſharp cure the church muſt have, or elſe be undone, and the judgment of God be an help, when all other means have proved ſo ineffectual; and ſhould it not be a ſtrengthning remark in ſuch a day, that the church's zeal and ſtraightneſs, and her ſun-ſhine have been to riſe and ſet together.

4. Amidſt theſe ſtrange diſappointments of the times, and viſible breaking of human props, it is known alſo, how carnally the weapons of our warfare have been managed? how fond upon the grandeur of a civil ſtate, and the ſhadow and friendſhip of great men, as though the ſpirit of the Lord had not done more than all human might or power to put the churches on their feet? Thus have we gone out of the way of our ſtrength, and founded our confidence on grounds of ſenſe, and forgot theſe great appearances of God in times of greateſt wickedneſs, where there was much truſting and little ſenſe; and it may be too clearly ſeen, how few amongſt the throng of profeſſed Proteſtants know what it is to have the Bible for the ſecurity of the proteſtant intereſt, and thus quiet their ſoul, though all the foundations ſeem to ſhake, becauſe they know the cauſe is certainly God's, and he is faithful who hath promiſed.

5, It is moſt diſcernible, that as no outward advantage put in the church's hand, but hath ſtill ſome further weight laid thereon than it could bear; ſo have we ſeen ſuch a dependance make the moſt promiſing-means to miſcarry. Oh! for many years have not our eyes been ſhut, to diſcern how far our ſtrength hath departed, by ſo large a reckoning upon viſible props, the ſupport and countenance of princes, while we forgot the guide of our youth, and the covenant of our God, that for this hath the church's hair been cut, and expoſed to their contempt, who ſometimes were forced to look upon her with fear and wondering, when God was known in her palaces for a refuge. It is ſure carnal confidence hath a curſe waiting on it in the Bible, *Jer.* xvii. 8. and where the Lord hath curſed, none can make it thrive.

6. Yet under ſo ſad a diſcovery, and whatever as to publick appearances may be ſeen of the Lord's departure, it is ſure there hath been no ſuch time that a man can ſay, his uprightneſs and love to the truth fails him, or ceaſeth to

to have inward joy and peace following it, and that in any ſecret corner, where integrity and ſtraightneſs is found, there wants a witneſs of Gods taking pleaſure therein. No, e'er this fail, the ſhadow muſt ceaſe to follow the body. It is indeed an hour of deſertion; but ſuch as lets us ſee our ſin, but gives no daſh to our duty. It is a witneſs for God againſt mens indifference, remiſſneſs, and carnal boaſting in following the truth, but in it ſelf a viſible confirmation thereof, and thus doth the church more help than hurt.

7. We ſee this clear, that under the *New Teſtament*, the whole militant church as well as particular churches, hath her remarkable periods, as of tranquility ſo of trouble, and demoliſhing, when ſackcloth is every where ſhaped out for her; yea I muſt ſay it is not croſs to the word, but may be further confirming thereto; that in ſo far as there is no through Reformation, and ſome antichriſtian mixture found amongſt the reformed churches; in ſo far theſe alſo ſhould get ſome touch of the judgment (though to heal, and not to ruin) that comes along with the pouring out of the viols of the throne of the Beaſt.

8. So ſore a deſertion is found not only to ſuit the times of the goſpel, but the beſt times thereof, and to a riſing day of the church, for this in the way and method of providence is moſt clear, that no great piece of the Lords work for his truth and people hath been ever brought forth, but with ſore wreſtlings, and is ſeen to ſtay long in the birth, the moſt remarkable mercies have been firſt loſt, and made hopeleſs before they were found, yea no obſervable brightneſs but by ſome dark hour hath been uſhered in, for which there needs no particular inſtances as in *Egypt*, as in *Mordecay*'s time, ſince the whole ſcripture doth witneſs this.

9. We have this day ſeen nothing but what might have been looked for, that the trials of the church ſhould be ſuited to her light, and keep ſome proportion therewith and where ſo great a truſt and talent hath been given, ſuch ſearching times muſt come about, to ſeek in its return, and improvement, for this anſwers to the way of the Lord and his word; nor is it ſtrange to ſee a peoples ſtroke and trouble ſuited to that degree of their former exaltation. See *Luke* xii. 48. What ſharp and perplexing times are there after ſo large a meaſure of light held forth, nor is it ſtrange, theſe things fall in with our day, which did not meet the Reformed churchs at their breaking up, who had not our diſcoveries of the truth with ſo long, and bright ſhining forth of the light.

10. This ſhould not be ſtrange, when the faith of the ſaints hath got great confirmations, that ſearching times then follow, for where nothing is to ſhake and offend, there can be no tried eſtabliſhment. See *John* xvi. *Do you now believe*, ſaith our bleſſed Lord to his diſciples, *the hour is coming, and now is when you ſhall all be ſcattered.* This we find after ſuch pains he had taken to confirm them, yea thus is it ſeen how trials are ſuited to the greatneſs of that work the Lord hath on foot. See *Jer.* xxix. 10. there is a time when all things cry, *be in pain* and unuſual wreſtlings before ſome remarkable birth.

11. However preſent appearances look, we know a ſad deſertion, and the church's real growth, with her gaining ground, can at once ſuit together, whoſe true intereſt without taking a falſe meaſure; none can judge. 1. From outward grandeur, ſince oppreſſion and greateſt weights have been ſtill found to make way for her growth, and for that end was *Pharaoh* raiſed of the Lord, to make the church's riſing more conſpicuous. 2. Not from the neareſt, and immediate events, until the viſion ſpeak, and bring the whole complex providence before us. 3. Nor can a true meaſure be taken from

the preſent reaping ſince a hid growth is oft found, where the ſeed lies long under ground, which the children may reap, that ſeemed loſt to theſe who went before. 4. Not from a great falling off, ſince the church's intereſt is oft no leſs promoted this way, and the truth ſealed, than by the bringing in of others. 5. Not from ſad afflicting times, ſince out of the greateſt depths, hath the moſt near and ſenſible approach to God been known, which in the iſſue hath helped more to raiſe than all her troubles could ruin. 6. it is clear alſo, not from the indignation of the Lord gone forth againſt the church, can we take ſuch a meaſure; ſince her bearing thereof is found a begun ſtep in her relief, and to an open pleading of her cauſe, and bringing her forth to the light, *Mic.* vii. 9. where we ſee though the church is thus laid in the duſt, yet is her intereſt kept alive in her cauſe, to bring her up with it, when the Lord ſhall declare his being a pleader thereof.

12. Though it now look like the going down of the ſun on moſt of the Reformed churches, and that therewith we have ſo affrighting a ſight before us, what hath befallen many famous churches in former times; yet is there ſolid ground, I humbly judge without flattering our ſelves, or any over-ſtretching our hope, to ſee here theſe different periods of time, how ſuch a ſun-ſet, and the utter diſſipation of theſe churches, did then with a remarkable and ſad *criſis* meet with the entry of that long and diſmal night of antichriſt's reign, his begun reſign, and that breaking in alſo of ſuch a deluge of *Mahometiſm*, which did after follow, yea thus in a time, when having ſinned away their light, the ſcripture was to have an accompliſhment in the Lord's departure, and that great work of his Judgment then coming on the chriſtian world: But now we ſee, and certainly know, how this ſtrange and unuſual darkneſs over the church, in a bleſſed conjunction and *criſis*, does meet with antichriſt's begun fall, and a growing light; and upon the church's riſe, when the intereſt of the goſpel now is upon the aſcendant, and when it is ſo clear, what now is under the Mediator's hand to be brought forth; which is a farther extent of his viſible kingdom to build, and not to caſt down, to plant and not to cut off theſe churches, in the planting of which, as ground gained from antichriſt, yea in purſuance of a full conqueſt, he did ſo eminently appear.

I muſt further add this, though it ſeem to beget a fear and heſitation with ſome; the ceaſing of ſuch great ſigns and appearances of the Lord, in the behalf of the truth, that were once ſeen, and how to anſwer that queſtion, *Where is the Lord God of our Elijahs*, and his great power, and outſtretched arm, by which he ſhewed terrible things for his people, as a return of their prayer. Let us conſider, 1. It is the ſame reproached and darkened cauſe of the Proteſtant church, which God once viſibly owned, and did bear witneſs to by great and extraordinary ſigns of his power, ſo that all may ſee it is not the truth, but falling off from it, with which he now quarrels. 2. Such extraordinary evidences we now are not to wait for, when ſo great a breaking up of light, beyond former times, hath been to clear the truth; for this were to tempt the moſt high, who at the firſt dawning of his work, when difficulties ſeemed in an ordinary way inſuperable, did thus appear. 3. Even under ſuch a cloud there want not ſome great and immediate confirmations from the Lord, and a viſible witneſs from him to the cauſe of the Reformed church, if we had eyes to ſee. 1. That with the ſaddeſt hour, and exigence of the church, ſome ſtep of providence hath ſtill been made to appear, and therewith ſo remarkable a breaking forth of light, as it were out of the bowels of ſuch a darkneſs, that the things which threatned moſt have more fully anſwered the churches mercy, than any way we could have choſen. No ſuch black cloud hath been, but ſome enlighten-

ing providence, and marvelous witneſs of the Lord's condeſcendence we have ſeen as it were ſet over-againſt it, yea ſtill ſome new ground of hope made to break up, ſo as to balance with a day of greateſt fears. 2. We cannot but ſee ſince the Lord hath made it ſo clear, that there is ſome hewing of ſtones, and preparing of materials under all this ruin, ſuch as point at ſome great and excellent building, which yet is bringing forward. 3. And hath there not been a diſcernible growth of light, and more clear diſcoveries of the truth, that have gone forth with theſe ruining times. 4. How convincing a reſtraint from the Lord upon mens wrath, to purſue their advantage and power againſt the truth, and its followers, I muſt ſay hath to admiration been witneſſed in this low eſtate of the Reformed church, and ſuch diverting providences as have conſtrained their violence to run in another channel. 5. This all may ſee, for their confirming more in the truth, that theſe who in ſuch a day have fallen off to Popery, have had their way viſibly uſhered in by atheiſm and ignorance, or the byaſs of ſome outward intereſt, and thus found it eaſy to change their religion, who never yet in earneſt embraced any, yea to turn *popiſh*, e'er they knew what it was to be chriſtians: Now for this I dare appeal to the conſcience of the moſt ordinary obſervers. 6. Hath there not been oft cauſe to obſerve how the greateſt eſſays of the adverſary, which ſeemed to ſpeak a preſent ruin, have brought forth the very contrary effects. No ſuch ſtorm on the church but ſome rent thereby hath been payed to the truth: no preſent loſs, but another way there was found ſome viſible advantage, nor have ſuch ſigns been wanting of the Lord's immediate appearance in the darkeſt hour, that may witneſs his peoples gleanings are yet this day better than the full vintage of his adverſaries; and with much ſolid aſſurance it may be further ſaid, whatever former ages have ſeen of the Lord's marvelous doings to confirm his truth, and the cauſe of the Reformed church, in the ſight of the nations, and there are yet greater things to be brought forth; and a rare hiſtory of providence ſhall be writ, and tranſmitted to the poſterity where theſe two muſt be recorded together, and meet in one witneſs; which is foretold, *Rev.* xv. 3. *Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord; and juſt and true are thy ways.*

CHAP. IV.

IN proſecution of this ſubject, a ſecond particular propoſed, I ſhall here endeavour to clear, which is the *great import of the preceeding demonſtration, how marvelous a light doth thence reſult to the church,* and what a witneſs is this day of the near approach and condeſcendence of the Lord, to the faith of his people, and a price for wiſdom thus put in their hand, by bringing forth his word, and the certainty of its taking place ſo convincingly before us in the event; which I muſt ſay, were it underſtood, might be of that uſe to make our believing and adventuring on the truth as plain and comfortable a way, and as fully quieting to the ſoul, as the way of ſenſe and feeling; but oh how ſtrange is it that whilſt ſuch a thing cannot be hid, yet is ſo little laid to heart, that it ſeems moſt of chriſtians do not really know what is the eſtate they poſſeſs, but in their converſe with ſupernatural truths, are like men half waking, who ſee things before them, yet is it ſo far a dream, that there wants a ſerious reflecting on the great reality of ſuch things they ſee. Now to clear what a light breaks thus up to the church, from theſe diſcoveries of the faithfulneſs of God in his word, and ſuch wonderful events, wherein it takes place; I offer theſe twelve *inferences*.

SECT.

Sect. 1. Firſt we ſee here the eminent verification of this truth, *that unto the church are committed the Oracles of God, Rom.* iii. 2. How ſo valuable, and ſacred a treaſure that by no private conveyance, but by a publick delivery was once put in her hand, is ſtill under truſt depoſited there to be kept; and made uſe of unto the ſecond coming of the Lord. I know this is a truth by few under debate or queſtion, yet how few are there found to believe it, or ſo much in earneſt as to bring it near their thoughts, how ſuch a record is, and ſhould this day be in the world, where as real an intercourſe with heaven and the glorious God whoſe throne is there, is certainly to be had, as if with our eyes we ſhould ſee ſome every hour come thence with their face ſhining, and written tables in their hand of the counſels of God to his people; now as here is a matter of the greateſt concernment that ever was made known to men; in what a tranſport of joy ſhould it put our ſoul to know we have no leſs clear and demonſtrative evidence of its certainty by the verification of the ſcripture, that ſuch *are the very Oracles of God*, which came down from himſelf, and do, 1. Stand open day and night for giving anſwers to the church, ſo as none needs fear to come at a wrong hour, or miſs their errand, when they come, if they indeed ſeek counſel there, that they may follow it. 2. Which ſhew forth things to come, and the great revolutions of the world, with their proper circumſtances, when not the ſmalleſt appearance thereof from outward things could be judged. 3. Which have at all times a certain ſound, and leaves none in the dark, with a double reſponſe; but let the world be what it will unto the righteous, it ſaith, *Surely it ſhall be well with them, Iſa.* iii. 10, 11. While it hath this audible voice to others, *There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked, nor ſhall it be well with them, though their days ſhould be prolonged in the earth, Eccleſ.* viii. 12. 4. Theſe all may ſee, are *the very Oracles of God*, which regard not the perſons of men, but with an awful voice do ſpeak to cities and kingdoms, and to the greateſt monarchs there, to the judge on the bench, and the man of violence, when his oppreſſion is backed with power, what none elſe dare tell. 5. Which gives anſwers contrary to human reaſon, and viſible appearances, yet to this day did its ſentence never fail, nor deceive the man who truſted thereto. But when the ſuffrage of the ſcripture, and of the world are in moſt direct oppoſition to other, it doth not long want a viſible deciſion, whoſe word ſhall ſtand. 6. Theſe who enquire here, will find the way of the Lord ſo far laid open in the darkeſt times, that they may as evidently ſee the ſpecial and demonſtrative cauſes of the ſtrange judgments that are falling out in the earth as the certainty of their accompliſhment. 7. And are they not found to be *living Oracles*, as *Acts* vii. 38. which do not convey light only, but heat and power to the ſoul. 8. It is no repott but of undoubted experience, how clear a diſcovery is thence to a chriſtian, when nowhere elſe he could know his way, or underſtand theſe great depths: 1. The depths of Satan, which thus are found out, and made diſcernible for keeping at a diſtance therewith. 2. Theſe depths of povidence which are ſo marvelouſly unvailed, and opened up there when once a chriſtian gets near theſe oracles. 3. How thus alſo is there a further enlightening of the church, and in every time ſome opening up of the deep things of God in his word, which lay hid there from former ages.

Sect. 2. This clear diſcovery is here from our more full perſwaſion of the truth, what marvelous things have a preſent being and exiſtence now before our eyes in the event, which many ages before they were brought forth, we know had a viſible being in the ſcripture, and there were revealed and looked after by the church. This is a truth I muſt ſay, ſo great and convincing,

and

and of that use to confirm the faith of the saints, and be an helper to their joy, that the ordinary impression most have thereof, shews how little it is either known or seriously considered. 1. That nothing is here conjectural, where a mistake can be from the events being afar off, and remote from our senses, but as we know they are written in the Bible, and there only have been revealed; it is as sure, they are visible realities in our sight this day, and for what thereof is not accomplished, it may be a further seal to the truth, when this is so clear, the time for their taking place is not yet come. 2. Can men open their eyes and not see the greatest Prophecies of the *Old Testament* are at this day fulfilled, except they contradict their sense as well as reason; even such as the whole race of the *Jews* attest to be a part of the oracles of God committed to their fore-fathers, and by them owned, and delivered with a most severe circumspection to the least letter or title thereof from one age to another? 3. It is undeniable also, these events are such, that all the diviners of the world, by the stars, or any probable conjunction of natural causes, could never reach, or have the least discovery of their rise, to bring them under their prædictions; but any glance they had was by a light borrowed from the Bible; so that the certainty thereof being clear, men cannot but see these are depths not only above the furthest reach of human understanding, but above the reach of fallen angels, or any depths of the bottomless pit to find out such things as the scripture hath shewed; yea let a search be made amongst the wise and learned of this world, (for which I attest the greatest atheists) if either *Aristotle* or *Plato*, or any since, who came to the greatest height of natural knowledge, in all their discoveries had ever the least thought or notion of such things as a new creation, of the power and efficacy of the gospel, or that there is a *Holy Ghost*, and what his witnessing, comforting, and teaching imports, which yet to the meanest of the saints, are as clear and certain, as that there is day and night.

Sect. 3. This may be clearly seen from the preceeding demonstration, how the most wonderful works of God, and his greatest appearances in the earth are peculiarly directed to confirm and seal the truth of his word, which *he hath magnified above all his name*; and for this end, to give a being and visible performance to the scripture, the most glorious actings of the Mediator under the *New Testament* are shewed forth, for which cause when he is going forth to war, in the greatness of his strength, with his vesture dipt in blood, he is known by that name, *The word of God*, *Rev.* xix. 13. These also are in every time obvious evictions of this truth; 1. How the most extraordinary steps in the way of the Lord, which are visibly above nature, and out of the road of second causes; yet go not without the bounds and limits of the Bible, but are such as to the conviction of all, may be easie to bring within sight of that blessed record, and a convincing seal and verification thereof. 2. It is clear also, how these providences that are of the greatest extent and have a further reach than any private use, or the personal experience of the saints, yea are such whereby the whole church hath her publick remarks, and *experimenta lucifera*, are for that end evidently direct, to shew the destiny and fate of flourishing cities and states, and of the greatest Monarchs is no casual thing, but the visible product of the scripture, which there have been foretold. 4. This also may be clearly seen, how neither *Greece* nor *Rome*, whose conquests once were spread through most of the known world, did ever know such triumphs as the truth and faithfulness of God hath had over the thrones of kingdoms, as well as the meanest cottages, which as it makes the sea keep her bounds, so doth it restrain the rage of man, yea brings down from their seat to an untimely grave such as have made the earth to tremble,

and the nations ſhake in their day; while it may be no leſs marvelous in raiſing the poor from the duſt, to witneſs, there is nothing wherein the Lord doth more conſpicuouſly appear, and ſhew the greatneſs of his power, than in bringing his word to a performance.

SECT. 4. Is it not an undeniable and clear *inference*, from what hath been held forth of theſe great events of the ſcripture, that it is ſure this day there is more at our hand, to be convincing and demonſtrative of the truth, if we could advert thereto, than if *an immediate audible voice from heaven were given.* I know if once ſuch an extraordinary ſign from the Lord might be had, men would be ready to think, there needed no more to put them beyond all heſitation and debate; ſuch is the ignorance of many, who know not what they poſſeſs and is alredy at their hand, when more is really given than mens heart could in this ask, as the Holy Ghoſt does expreſly ſhew, 1 *Pet.* i. 18, 19. if the ſenſe of that ſcripture were ſeriouſly pondered, *And this voice which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount*; but to ſhew, that here is more than any ſuch voice now given *of* the church for her aſſurance of truth, ſee *v.* 19. *We have a more ſure word propheſie, unto which you do well to take heed,* &c. wherein is clearly held forth: 1. That ſomething elſe than an ordinary regard to the ſcripture is in this required, for a through perſwaſion of its truth; there is a *taking heed*, προσέχοντες, which imports a ſingular attention where the ſoul followeth the eye as in an intenſe motion. 2. That thus is there another ſight to be had of the written word, and of theſe wonderful things there, which, through *not taking heed*, moſt paſs by, and do not diſcern. 3. It is moſt clear, how ſuch an advertence and *taking heed* to the ſcripture is underſtood here, with ſome peculiar reſpect thereto, as it is a *more ſure word of propheſie*; how it takes place, and hath demonſtrative evidences of the certainty of its truth in the event; for thus doth the apoſtle oppoſe it to ſo extraordinary a ſign from heaven. 4. It cannot be poſſibly ſuppoſed, that the word as it is written ſhould be *more ſure*, as to an objective certainty, than his ſpeaking to men by audible voice, ſince both are his own word. But ſuch a preference as is here held forth, there is clearly witneſſed, that in the way of the written word more is really given to the church, if it were rightly underſtood, and that we could but advert thereto, for begetting a further ſubjective certainty within the ſoul, than either miracles or any extraordinary ſign from heaven could do. Now to evince this, how great a light thus may be had, and ſhould break up by *taking heed* to the word, as it is a *more ſure word of propheſie*, I offer theſe, 1. Is it not clear, from ſo wonderful a product of the ſcripture, above nature or natural cauſes, and theſe great appearances of God there which are ſo near, even to our touch in feeling; how convincingly they bring a greater demonſtration of the truth to mens eyes, than ſo extraordinary a voice could bring to their ears. 2. It is ſure, ſuch a diſcovery is in this day to be had of the written word, that in a more diſcernible way than by any outward voice or ſound may be known by power and life, yea by that ineffable evidence and light, with ſo near and feeling a converſe with the inviſible God, as there is found and experienced by every one of the ſaints, that can make it no leſs diſcernible from the word of man, than if we heard it by ſome audible and articulate voice ſpoken out of heaven. 3. What *Jacob* ſaw but in a viſion, may we not here ſee with our eyes, by ſuch a *taking heed*; a *Ladder ſet betwixt heaven and earth*, by which the glorious God his coming down to converſe with the church and the ſouls of his people, is by as near an approach witneſſed in the written word, as if he ſhould come with ſuch a ſtupendious extraordinary voice: ſo that as the top of this ladder,

in its deſcent and original is ſeen to reach to heaven; it is ſure nothing can be more viſible, than how its foot alſo toucheth the earth, and thus its other end is on the ground, to the ſenſe and feeling of the weakeſt chriſtian, in their experience of the truth. 4. By *taking heed* to the ſcripture is not ſuch an evidence and atteſtation to be had of its truth, from a continued *ſeries* of events, and the known certainty thereof, that for our being ſure and throughly confirmed, doth far exceed any tranſient irradiation of the mind, which ſo ſtrange a voice and ſound from heaven could cauſe? 5. To ſhew the preference of the word to all extraordinary means, we ſee it is the very laſt way and means now for revealing the counſel of God to the church; yea, how it is ſuited to theſe times, when the greateſt light and moſt clear opening up of the truth is expreſly promiſed, and to be looked after as that which hath the advantage every way of more extraordinary ſigns, whereby in former times the counſels of God were revealed. O if men knew, or would but let themſelves know, what here might be reached by ſuch a ſerious enquiry, and *taking heed* to the ſcripture, how eaſy were it to ſee that ſomething much greater than an audible voice from heaven is this day at their hand, to aſſure them of its truth.

Sect. 5. Here we may clearly ſee ſuch a reality and ſubſtance in the ſupernatural truths of the word, that whoever will they may come and *feel after God there*, and with the greateſt certainty of ſenſe be conducted to the things themſelves, which moſt within the church know but in the *theory* and notion. This is indeed a convincing evidence, and ſuch as nothing poſſibly can be beyond it; if we conſider, 1. How the object here is not at a diſtance, but in its approach ſo near, as any thing can be, which is found and touched in mens hands, where they know it is no miſtake, but in the greateſt compoſure of ſpirit, have a preſent and rational reflection on their own experience. 2. Such as they are ſure it can be no caſual thing, nor is it a groping in the dark; but thus every ſtep in the road of ſenſe and feeling is by rule and method, which hath ſcripture-light ſhining before it, ſo that they know by experience, this is nothing elſe but what they were called to believe, and could have read in the Bible before they knew any ſuch thing: for thus are the written word and the experience of the ſaints, found ſuch relatives, and the tye betwixt them ſo diſcernible, as in the moſt obvious connexion that poſſibly could be in nature, betwixt the cauſe and the effect, or the fountain and the ſtream. 3. What here is felt, and proved to be in the way of the word, we ſee alſo is the repeated experience of others, even of the whole race of the ſaints, who in that good and old way of converſe with God and following him, did in ages bear the ſame witneſs. 4. That this *feeling* is an undoubted reality, is ſo clear, that theſe now know it who could not believe the truth of ſuch a thing, and did no leſs look thereon as a dream, than moſt of this generation do, until the truth once touched them at the heart. 5. And is it not ſuch a *feeling* that there can be no more ſure converſe by the ſenſes with this viſible world, than that the ſaints have with theſe great things revealed in the Bible, when they cannot but witneſs what they have both ſeen and known?

Sect. 6. Thus is it clear from the foregoing demonſtration, how *great an aſſiſtance ſenſe offers to the chriſtian's faith*, and what ſolid improvements might be made this way, for a more through reliance on the ſecurity of the word and promiſe, when ſo much is given, that men may ſee as well as believe. For which ſome things would be previouſly conſidered, how this is to be underſtood, and what a certainty is here, that we are not graſping at a ſhadow, in a matter of ſuch weight and near concernment to us. 1. It is ſure, there are ſpiritual things, and great ſupernatural truths of the written word to be known by ſight as well as by faith, whilſt we are here; nor is there

any

any of the saints but can as firmly abide by their spiritual sense, and the reality thereof, as by that which is natural; that the one is no less undoubtedly certain than the other. 2. We clearly see, how the Lord himself makes an appeal to the sense and experience of his people, *Isa.* xl. 28. *Hast thou not heard? hast thou not known?* and that such a trial is called for, to taste and see if he be not what his word declares him to be, *Psal.* liv. 8. where he hath so far condescended, that none needs take his word on trust from men, but their own eyes may see it. 3. Though it is clear, that no natural science, no proposition in *Euclide* can have such firm and sure demonstrations as the truth of the written word; yet is it not too obvious, what hesitation and dark apprehensions are about this, if some other sight and feeling than what by nature or natural reason can be had, be not in earnest sought after. 4. I confess it is one of the excellencies of faith to believe and not see; yea, these are most blessed, for here we must *walk by faith, not by sight*, which is the very first and last work of a christian. But I fear a sad mistake, many are in of the right sense of this, as if to believe were some dark and uncomfortable thing, and that the less men see before them, it were so far an higher act of their faith, since this only can be understood, *quoad evidentiam rei, sed non quoad evidentiam testimonii*; that when no appearances are of the things promised, or how such should be, then to credit the word for all, is a giving glory to God, and one of the choicest acts of faith within time. But for what concerns the evidence and certainty of the word, and our security therein, I must say, it is some higher degree christians are called to seek and look after, that their walking this way may be by sight, than seems to be either thought of, or believed by most within the church; yea, such an evidence thereof, that might be truly *physical*, and as infallibly sure, as men can have of the being of the sun, when they see it with their own eyes. 5. Is it not undeniable, that according to the degree of evidence, so doth it embrace it as good, yea, thus only can it have a sweet repose and comfort by a fiducial recumbence thereon? And on this account is it now clear, how it is the want of *sense* that makes so great a want of faith amongst the saints?

Having premised these things for giving some light to this truth, and to prevent mistake, I shall but in a few words more touch it, since what hath been held forth in the preceeding chapters, bear the same witness, how great a discovery is thus of the truth, and certainty of the written word, and what marvelous advantage is at our hand to believe, if we could see it aright. But for a further clearing I offer here these solid improvements of *sense*, that may be convincingly obvious to every discerning christian. 1. How such hath his experience of the word which he knows well, and hath been so oft repeated, that as a lighted torch does go before him in every new act of his faith, for what is to come, and lets him see it is no dark or untrodden path nor is it a fixing on some doubtful and abstract notion; but that assuredly he is on safe and known ground here, yea, such that as he *knows whom here he hath believed*, and is sure it is the same word, and the very same sealed truth and security which he hath often trusted, and had it made good. O what might be found here, to make a christian's way pleasant and easy, if the solid improvement of this were but understood. 2. Is there not such an assistance *sense* affords for believing, that it can shew how great a part of the Bible is already put in the christian's hand by present possession; yea, thus points him to the very particular truths, where the day-star hath been made to arise within his heart, with so sensible a breaking up of light and comfort, and strength, amidst his saddest hours, as hath oft put him to set a mark thereon, like *Jacob's* erecting his pillar, how there the comforter and his soul did meet, when no meeting could have been more seasonable. 3. It is not the object of our

faith

faith only, but we know by ſight how viſible an impreſs of the written word is on the ſerious and tender walk of the ſaints, that as the one is ſo convincingly, ſo is the other alſo; yea, thus how many impreſſions thereof are in every age ſeen to be caſt off I am ſure to the conviction of the world. 4. And is it not by *ſenſe* we know the undoubted certainty of theſe truths, which are the greateſt contradiction to our outward ſenſes, how there is a rejoycing in tribulation, a real abounding under wants, a being ſtrong when we are weak; yea, that an unſpeakable comfort can be really had out of the greateſt depths of a chriſtian's trouble. 5. We know alſo by ſenſe, that as every living thing hath food ſuited to its kind, ſuch a ſubſtance is in the ſcripture, and a natural ſuiting of the truths there to feed, nouriſh, and ſtrengthen a ſpiritual life, with as great a fitneſs, as our daily bread can be to that which is natural. 6. It is the undoubted witneſs of ſenſe, that there is a power in godlineſs, as well as the form, and ſuch an evidence, and *demonſtration of the ſpirit*, with the word, that its ſound can be no more ſure and diſcernible to the ear, than it is to the ſoul of a chriſtian. 7. Except we quit our ſight, as well as reaſon, we muſt ſee ſuch a vital ſcent and air there is with ſerious godlineſs, as no falſe ſhew could ever counterfeit, no more than art can make a dead picture breath and ſtir; yea, that the product of the goſpel, and theſe great effects it hath in the world are indeed above nature, and ſuch as no human power, or moral influence could poſſibly reach. 8. It is not only from the Bible, but with the greateſt certainty of *ſenſe*, that the ſaints know, there is an immediate preſence of the Comforter, acceptance and acceſs in prayer, the Spirit's making interceſſion in prayer, the Spirit's making interceſſion in them with ſighs and groans which cannot be uttered, yea, ſuch an immediate relief and comfort to the ſoul ſo ſenſibly found there, that makes their very bones to bleſs him, and ſay, *who is like unto thee O Lord.* 9. Is it not made obvious to our *ſenſe*, that when once men are engaged in the way of the Lord, they have got ſome new acquaintance, and ſome other ſociety than men to converſe with; yea, what a marvelous change grace then makes on them, from what they were, to aſſure us of that change glory will ere long make on them from what they now are? 10. Can there any thing be more evident, than this to our *ſenſe*, that where grace is in a vigorous exerciſe in any, it gives another appearance than once they had, yea, then it doth ſhine with ſuch a luſtre, as will darken all about them? I ſhall but further add, what may be as evident to ſenſe as that there is light and darkneſs, that inbred contrariety which is in moſt of men againſt holineſs, and how thus there are two contrary ſtates here, to witneſs the certainty of theſe contrary ſtates of heaven and hell in another world.

Sect. 7. Thus we may ſee, that to theſe who believe is *the exceeding greatneſs of the power of God*, and *his mighty working*, *moſt eminently ſhewed forth*; yea, in the way of the word, and its continued verification, more than in any extraordinary path. This is the teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt, *Eph.* i. 19; which though ſtrange and amazing, yet nothing more ſure, that there is none of the ſaints who is exerciſed unto godlineſs, but may know the truth of undeniable miracles, and a real converſe therewith, within his ſoul, if a more ſerious reflection were on his own experience, how immediately from heaven theſe are wrought. I confeſs it may ſeem to bring it under debate, if this can be a truth, or if it be really believed, when it doth not cauſe a more frequent tranſport of joy, and wondering among chriſtians, thus to know ſuch near and ſenſible communications betwixt God and their ſoul, by the ſcripture; and that it is found from him, which under their ſaddeſt preſſures makes their work eaſy, both in them and about them; yea,

how the greateſt effects of a ſupernatural and divine power that ever was ſhewed to men, ſuch as to raiſe the dead, open the eyes of the blind, and to bring forth a creation out of nothing, are ſurely acted over in the heart of each of the ſaints, though ſpiritually, yet in as great a reality there, and with no leſs demonſtrative evidence of God's immediate power, as there can be of theſe extraordinary miracles which were once ſhewed forth to the view and conviction of the world.

Sect. 8. We ſee this truth, and how clearly it is witneſſed from what hath been held forth, *That the confirmations of the laſt times are greater than thoſe of the firſt*, and 'tis more eaſy now to believe, and be perſwaded of the certainty of the ſcripture, than in the days when ſuch extraordinary ſigns and appearances of God were held forth to his church. I know this will ſeem ſtrange, and by ſome be queſtioned how it can be a truth, that there ſhould be now more advantage to believe the word, and we accountable for the improvement of a larger ſeal and witneſs thereto, than in the days of the apoſtles and primitive church, before whom ſuch undeniable miracles were wrought. But let us alſo conſider, 1. What great things of the ſcripture have this day taken place, and are diſcloſed in the event, which then were hid from their eyes; and as we have that advantage of all which from the Lord was brought to confirm his truth in theſe times, and may recur thereunto, with the ſame certainty as if we had ſeen them: O what a marvelous ſeal hath been ſince added, which former times did not know. 2. As it is ſure none can deny a greater light hath now broken up to the church; than what was in former ages, and ſince the firſt times of the goſpel, that there hath been a continued finiſhing of the myſtery of God in the ſcripture, the performance whereof is the great intent of providence; ſo is it alſo clear what a further revealing and bringing to light hath been therewith of his deep counſels there, which is the peculiar work of the Holy Ghoſt. 3. Is it not now manifeſt, the time of that promiſe *Dan.* xii. 4. is come, for ſome greater diſcoveries of theſe truths which then were ſealed up, when they ſhall not run in vain who are on this bleſſed ſcent, to know what the word is bringing forth for the church; yea, that it is ſuch a day when ſome great ſcripture-truths are near the height and full period of their accompliſhment, and therewith a more remarkable piece of the work of God than former ages have known; for which, whatever preſent darkneſs, now we have ſure ground to believe that the *brightneſs of the ſecond coming of the Lord*, 2 Theſ. ii. 8. by which the man of ſin ſhall be utterly aboliſhed, is in ſome meaſure begun, and ſo much thereof ſeen as may be an earneſt in our hand of what we believe and wait for before the end. 4. Such an advantage is this day beyond the beſt of former ages, that we may ſee what length the courſe of the goſpel, and of the church militant, is now come; and how far the times of the *Gentiles* are fulfilled, which if it were not thus verified in the event, how hard ſhould it be to believe a truth ſo contrary to all human appearances.

Sect. 9. Thus it doth manifeſtly appear from the fore-going demonſtration, that theſe *are not more wonderful truths we are now called to believe*, which ſeem at a diſtance ſo ſtrange and aſtoniſhing; *than ſuch we certainly know, and have ſeen with our eyes accompliſhed*; nor are the objects of our faith, that the ſcripture is yet to bring forth more great, and above nature's underſtanding, than theſe which are the objects of ſenſe, and thus before us in the event; if we could ſeriouſly conſider, 1. What concerns the *jewiſh* reſtauration; a truth that ſeems ſo hard for many to believe how this ſhould take place, for that dead womb yet to bear, and theſe dry bones live which for ſo many days have lain at the graves mouth, is indeed a marvelous thing!

thing! But what do we see? and is accomplished about that people? Is it not also demonstrative of God, and of his marvelous power in the way of judgment, as this is of the soveraignty of his grace? I mean, that continued stroke of judicial blindness and obduration they are now under, amidst such clear evidences of the truth, which none possibly could resist, if that veil were not over their mind, the apostle speaks of, and their reason and understanding under a visible restraint; so that if these be considered what now hath taken place, and we are yet called to believe, is it not most clear, the one is not more strange and astonishing than the other. 2. We believe a pouring out of the last plague upon Antichrist, which shall overturn his seat and kingdom; for this is expresly foretold: But is it not evident, that nothing here is more strange, and above human appearances, than what this day is certainly seen of the truth of the scripture, in his revealing the manner of his appearance, that height of his power and prevalence over the saints, yea, what is already begun and fulfilled of his down-fall; which are truths that I may say once seemed no less amazing to the church at a distance, than the utter abolishing of that adversary, looks to us this day. 3. It is a special part of our faith for things yet to come, that ere long there will be a parting with time, and then shall we enter into an estate of everlasting blessedness, which is a great truth; yea, so great, that it may be strange how easy some can find the believing of such a thing from joy and wondering thereat; but what do we see, and have brought near our senses to confirm the scripture? Is it not something no less wonderful, that by the power of the gospel so many are entered out of darkness into a marvelous light, which is really another world; yea, such an estate that riseth higher above the condition of men by nature, than that glorious condition of the saints in heaven is now above theirs, who are yet journying towards it; for the difference of the one is but in degree, but the other in kind. 4. We believe this day the resurrection of the dead, and an undoubted accomplishment of that great truth, which to natural reason would seem a strange contradiction; but should we consider, that the same truth, though in a spiritual way, yet most visibly and upon an higher account is verified before our eyes; how it is sure, such are quickned and brought to life, who were dead in their sins, were past feeling, yea, for so many years have lain as in a cold grave, without sense of God or their own case, who in one moment, at the voice of the word, have been made to stir and arise; and is not this something as discernible above nature, or the influences of second causes, yea, as marvelous an act of divine power, as the resurrection of the body in the last day, which seems so dark and strange a thing for many to believe. 5. We wait also according to the promise for the second coming of the Lord, that this last piece of Canonick scripture shall assuredly be disclosed in the event, when the Lord himself will descend from heaven with the voice of the Arch-angel, and the trump of God, before whom these visible heavens shall pass away with a noise, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth be burnt up; for these are things which must shortly come to pass: but it is sure, nothing in all this is so marvelous or great, as what hath come to pass, when we now know, that God was manifested in the flesh, which is so marvelous a performance of the scripture, that after this mens hearts can have no shadow for fear, or distrust of the bringing forth of all that remains, there being this day so much in our hand, that we know the greatest truth in all the Bible hath already taken place.

Sect. 10. Thus is that marvelous discovery made clear before us, how great a thing the scripture is, *whose words are seen to be works*, and not the notion or *Idea* of things only, but such as have a real being and substance;

yea ſuch that their ſpeaking and doing is truly one and the ſame: if we could conſider, 1. How theſe are words to be felt by the ſoul, and as truly ſuited thereto, as for our eyes to read them; which have not only a ſound to the ear, but are ſweet to the taſte, yea ſuch as each of the ſaints from experience can ſay, *thy words were found, and I did eat them, and they were the rejoicing of my heart*, *Jer.* xv. 16. 2. We muſt ſay, no words like theſe were ever written ſince the beginning of time, which can take life and root in the ſoul, yea does it as really as the ſeed doth in the ground, and are fitted to be ingrafted and innaturalized there, ſo as no coalition in nature, betwixt the graft and the tree, can be more real than this, *Jam.* i. 21. 3. Theſe are words where the things promiſed, though hoped for, and to come, have even then a preſent being and ſubſiſtence in the promiſe, *Heb.* xi. 1. yea, ſuch are they, that it can be truly ſaid, if a chriſtian have the promiſe, he hath the mercy. 4. We know they are ſuch that can once both ſpeak the chriſtians peace, comfort, and ſtrength to them, and convey it, yea in that very moment effectuate what they ſay. 5. Is it not clear alſo, they are not more viſibly written in the Bible, than they are ſealed upon the ſoul of a chriſtian, and what may ſeem moſt wonderful there of the workings, breathings, ſtrengthenings, teachings, and witneſſing of the ſpirit, are found to be ſo many undoubted realities turned over again in a practical hiſtory. Oh! what a book is this; which men, if they ſhut not their eyes, might ſee the living God only could frame; where two impreſſions are oft made diſcernible at once, the one of words and ſyllables by the printer's types upon paper, but the other of life and power by the Holy Ghoſt, by whom theſe are made living words, ſo that the truth of grace, the breathings of God on his people, his felt preſence, and that near fellowſhip they are admitted to with him, may be ſeen to be nothing elſe but ſome part of this ſecond impreſſion of the Bible.

Sect. 11. Such are the wondrous works of God, wherein the ſcripture is verified before us, as clearly ſhews, *his name is near*, and how ſenſible an approach there is this day of it to the church, *Pſal.* lxxv. 1. How this is to be underſtood, ſome things would be previouſly conſidered, 1. That it is a truth verified to all, ſince there can be no poſſible diſtance from him who fills heaven and earth with his preſence, ſuch is the immenſity of his eſſence. 2. He is near in a more ſpecial way oft to his people, when they are not aware, and can diſcern no evidences thereof, *Job* ix. 11. *he goeth by me, and I ſee him not.* 3. It is known alſo, ſuch ſolemn and ſenſible approaches of God there are, which no words can expreſs; yea hath been in that manner witneſſed to ſome, that it might be judged not fit to communicate to others, it ſhould ſeem ſo ſtrange what they have certainly known of this. 4. It is clear, the moſt demonſtrative evidence of ſuch a truth, is in theſe great events of the ſcripture, and that there is it the holy God cauſeth his name and attributes paſs by before mens eyes, with ſo viſible a diſcovery of himſelf as is ſuited to awake the ſleeping world, and call them up to an awful regard of his being ſo near. But oh how little ſerious advertence is to this, and to theſe immediate appearances of the Lord, in verifying his truth, a ſight from which moſt of this generation do flee; yea how much is loſt, even by the ſaints, of theſe choice confirmations they might have thereof, through their not being more in an habitual frame to obſerve; but to evince the certainty of this bleſſed truth, and how near this his name is by a moſt ſenſible demonſtration to the experience of the ſaints in all ages; theſe ſure and known remarks I ſhall inſtance, 1. How it hath not been more diſcernible his ſpeaking to them in the promiſe, than that himſelf alſo hath done it, and hath given the performance

formance in their hand of that very word whereupon he had cauſed them to hope, *Pſal.* cxix. 49. yea thus ſo near an approach of his name, that as they knew a ſenſible and ſtrengthening influence on their hope to hold by the word, when no appearances were of its taking place; now they ſee and are ſure of the return with that convincing diſcovery, *This is our God, we have waited for him*, Iſa. xxvi. 8. 2. It is clear, there is none of the ſaints but in ſome meaſure know what it is to have their *Bethel*, where with *Jacob* they could ſay, *ſure God was there*; and have found that upon ſo near an approach as hath made both the time and place remarkable through all their life, *Hoſ.* xii. 4. 3. It is known alſo theſe providences do occur where an extraordinary appearance of God, and of ſome viſible appointments from heaven, like to *Hagar*'s well in the wilderneſs, hath been ſo clearly witneſſed, as hath cauſed a preſent fear as well as joy to ſome of the ſaints; and with *Abraham*'s ſervant to bow down and worſhip with wondering at ſo near an approach of his Name, *Gen.* xxvi. 26. 4. It is ſure, there are palpable anſwers to prayer, the ſaints have from heaven, to witneſs *his name is near*, which then brings a certainty and evidence there with, of their being accepted, their ſuit taken in, a looſing of their bonds; yea, thus a communication of ſome divine thing to quiet the ſoul, which no words can poſſibly tell, what they have both ſeen and felt of ſo near an approach; *but ſurely God hath heard me*, ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* v. Is not his being near, then witneſſed, when he openeth mens ears to diſcipline, and ſealeth their inſtruction, that ſuch a power and authority is found with their light, as forceth its paſſage down to the reins, and the hidden parts, to make them go bound in the ſpirit about their duty, and to hear that voice behind them, which ſaith, *This is the way, walk in it*, Job xxxiii. Iſa. xxx. 21. I ſhall but add, that nothing can be more known, than that ſenſible retreat the ſaints do find into his name, when from outward preſſures their ſoul hath been ready to ſink, when thus it is ſet open to take theſe in, on whom all paſſages of relief from without have been remarkably ſhut; yea, thence ſuch a light found to break up with that immediate conveyance of ſtrength and ſupport, that can only be underſtood by theſe that feel it, *Pſal.* ix.

SECT. 12. We have ſolid warrant for this, that ſo great a light doth reſult from the accompliſhment of the ſcripture, and theſe events wherein it takes place, as puts the *Angels in heaven* this day to the ſame ſtudy with us, to know by the church the *manifold wiſdom of God*, and what marvelous providences are thus witneſſed to his people; ſo that upon this account we know theſe excellent ſpirits who in that ſtate of perfection behold the face of God; even theſe are at ſchool with the ſaints here, to ſee and admire his works and various diſpenſations about the church, where his faithfulneſs and truth do ſo brightly ſhine forth, *Eph.* iii. 10. For it is clear, 1. Such are the depths of providence, and the unſealing of the written word, which is the alone work of the Mediator, and under his hand, as goeth beyond the wiſdom of angels, which they ſee and regard with wondering, but cannot comprehend, 1 *Pet.* i. 12. 2. It is ſure theſe have a more clear ſight, and with another kind of joy and delight look in on ſuch events of the ſcripture that concern the church, than can be by any here reached in the ſtate of mortality: and thus have they a knowledge by experience and obſervation of the great works of God in the world. 3. Though ſuch are in a glorified ſtate, yet are they called to learn and have ſome new acceſſion to their joy and knowledge, and which may be truly ſaid, ſome further proficience by this marvelous ſtudy of the continued verification of the world, how the counſel of the Lord takes place; yea, what a rare choice of means is to be ſeen for that end, how the contri-

vances of Satan, and all the churches enemies are ſo directed, as to bring forth the contrary effects; and the temptations, ſtraits, and down-caſtings of the ſaints, made the very way and method for their further raiſing: thus alſo they ſee how marvelous a conſent there is betwixt that infallible certainty of events from the determination of the Lord, and the liberty of ſecond cauſes; and how ſmall and contemptible means are made moſt ſubſervient for ſome of his greateſt works. 4. It may be clear from the word what ſpecial acceſs theſe great miniſters of providence, the angels, have for this bleſſed ſtudy, to and obſerve the wiſdom, power, and faithfulneſs of God, in their continued executing his commands, and doing of his will upon the earth; when 1. with a further light than can be known to us here, they do look in upon the whole conduct of human affairs, and event of things in the world (in which their ſervice is more than we are aware of) and there ſee how all is ordered in ſubſerviency to the ſcripture, and its taking place. 2. Theſe do in a ſpecial manner regard the aſſemblies of the church, and the great appearance of God there, as is clear, 1 *Cor.* xi. 10. but how little is this known or believed, that ſo near approaches thus are of the angels, and their being preſent at the meetings of the ſaints, in their care and overſight of them, that it may be truly diſpenced. 3. Such a continued converſe have theſe glorious ſpirits with the ſaints, in their care and overſight of them, that it may be truly ſaid, they are not only helpers, but joint-obſervers with ſuch, of the truth and tenderneſs of God, in the whole tract and conduct of providence about them. It is ſure the miniſtry of the angels does in no times ceaſe: and though it be not ſo clear from the ſcripture, a proper deputation of ſome of theſe for each particular chriſtian; yet what joy and aſtoniſhing thoughts ſhould it cauſe to conſider that it is ſo evident; theſe have a diſtinct charge and commiſſion for every one of the heirs of ſalvation, to prevent ſuch imminent hazards, when they are not aware thereof themſelves, and ſee to their bodies as well their ſouls; to go before them in ſuch undertakings as are in the way of the promiſe, for making them ſucceſsful; to reſcue where ordinary means fail; yea, to *hold them up as in their hands, that they daſh not their feet againſt a ſtone?* Now in all theſe as it is clear how marvelouſly they concur and are at work with delight; ſo have they ſome further knowledge this way, by obſerving the unſpotted faithfulneſs of God towards his people, yea thus are made partakers of their joy.

Sect. 13. This one inference more I muſt add from the preceding demonſtration, how convincing and clear a witneſs there is to this great truth, of a *real energy* and *efficacious working* of the ſpirit with the word, beyond any moral influence, or objective teaching thereof; *and of principles of grace immediately infuſed in the ſoul of a chriſtian*, whence ſuch are put forth to theſe acts and duties, that no improvement of natural abilities could ever reach. This is a truth of greateſt weight, which we ſee here ſo clearly evinced and proved, that I may ſay, nothing poſſibly can be more to enſure the being and certainty of a thing than this; *The ſcripture of God*, and *experience of the ſaints*, that in all ages they have had of its verification, do in one witneſs moſt convincingly meet; for ſuch evidence from the ſcripture there is, as all may ſee an eſſay to expunge theſe bleſſed truths out of it, muſt have the ſame reach to bring the whole in queſtion, they lye ſo cloſe with its moſt ſubſtantial parts, and run as it were through all the veins and arteries of that bleſſed record. And for the certainty of *experience*, with theſe diſcoveries on the ſoul of a chriſtian thereof, in that manner they are known, as may make it no leſs ſtrange to hear theſe brought in debate, than for a living man to be queſtioned about the truth of vital principles, without which he could

neither

neither act nor move. I am preſſed to touch this, not only as it falls in on the road with the preſent ſubject of this diſcourſe, and that from ſo neceſſary a riſe I could not now paſs it; but in a time alſo, when ſuch eſſays are as have gone a further length than to oppoſe the power and ſpirituality of religion in the practice, to attack it in its principles, and run down the notion thereof, as ſome impoſture or fanatick dream, with which they would perſwade us, the world hath been until this day cheated; yea with a confidence as may ſhew what an hour it is on the Reformed church, when ſuch come publickly forth, as dare offer to affront the God of truth, in the moſt clear diſcoveries of his word, by giving them the lye, and the ſpirit of grace in his eminent workings on the ſoul; yea to ſcoff at all ſenſible intercourſe betwixt Jeſus Chriſt and his church here upon the earth, in his manifeſtations and withdrawings, as the fumes of religious madneſs, or ſome ebbs and tides of the humours of the body. I confeſs, when at this rate they ſpeak, none needs wonder at perſonal reflections, as with a ſtrange height of inſolence they ſhew in reviling ſome, whoſe repute and honour in the church for the truth's ſake is above their power to darken. But what a time are we in, when atheiſm ſo far outgoes its uſual bounds, that it is not enough to get from the heart to the tongue, but it muſt be down at the pen, to deride the truth of godlineſs before others; ſerious thoughts of which, could not be without a terror and awful impreſſion on their hearts when alone with themſelves; and now muſt it not only be the ſong of the drunkards, but a matter of publick ſcoffing and ſport by ſuch who have the name of *doctors* within the church? It hath put me to ſtand with aſtoniſhment, to think what they poſſibly can intend in their venting ſuch doctrines, which all may ſee is not to diſpute, but to droll the world out of any ſettled perſwaſion of the truth, and to perſwade men to truſt their own eyes no more for what they read in the Bible, nor their experience for what is moſt certainly felt and proved on their ſoul; but conform, in the matter of religion, to the mode and faſhion of the times, as well as in their clothes: and to enforce this, ſome new and more effectual way muſt be taken, which I confeſs is ſuch as former ages have but little known, to dictate atheiſm and blaſphemy by rule, and bring them within the road of divinity, and the doctrine of the church. One thing in this looks to me with the greateſt terror, that ſad account which this gives of the temper and complection of the time; when it ſeems to be conſulted as the way to gain repute for parts, and being maſters of reaſon, to decry the power and life of religion; yea in that manner, as if their alone intereſt in owning the name of chriſtians, were to have ſome more advantage for caſting reproach on chriſtianity, and to weaken its awe on mens ſoul: but it is well their deſign lies not in the dark, nor is the bait ſuch as can cover the hook from the moſt ordinary obſervers; and tho' they bring another goſpel than what is delivered to us in the ſcripture, which too manifeſtly may be evinced, yet is it under no ſuch appearance as angels from heaven. What I ſpeak here is far from the leaſt intended irritation or prejudice at the perſons of any, againſt whom I know no intereſt or quarrel but one, which is for the truth's ſake, and that bleſſed name by the which we are called; having ſo enforcing a call to this, in purſuance of the preſent ſubject I now treat on from a doctrine ſtated in ſuch direct oppoſition thereto, and at this day thus publickly owned; which is this, "That religion is nothing elſe but what lies in moral virtue, and a liv-
"ing up to the dictates of natures light; yea no truth in the influences and
"efficacy of the ſpirit on mens ſoul beyond the objective teaching of the
"word, nor no inward principles of grace, a new birth, or any reality of a
"ſpiritual life, but what are the illuſions of mens fancy;" a doctrine were it

now owned, and put in the church's creed, we might truly say with the apostle, *then is the christian faith in vain*, and hath been so in the most fundamental articles thereof, since there was a church in the world; yea, then have all the saints since the beginning of time been *false witnesses against God*. I shall touch this but in a few words, since others more largely and with much advantage to the truth, have appeared therein; these particulars I only offer to be considered: How express and undeniable an opposition is here, 1. To the written word. 2. To the experience of the saints in all ages of the church. 3. To such clear demonstrative grounds of reason, as might enforce a conviction on the greatest atheists, though the scripture were laid aside. 4. How visible the tendency of this doctrine is, to strike at the root and vital parts of christianity, which all may see by undeniable consequences from it. 5. How obvious is it also that such must oppose their own light and conscience, in that reproach they cast on the truth, and these whom at so high a rate they challenge of enthusiasm and imposture, when the contrary is so known, that they can have no possible advantage for it, but by making lies their refuge.

For the first; Since it is clear, no other scheme or mould of religion we can own, but from the scriptures of God, let us but go in there and see what this is, and how express an opposition it stands in to such doctrine as is now publickly vented; which, as the scales of the balance, are such, that the one cannot possibly rise, but with the going down of the other; when so plain and full the scriptures witness is herein. 1. That it is an evangelick holiness and not legal that is now required under the dispensation of the gospel; and not a conformity only to the image of God in his Son; a holiness that from him as the principle must be derived, and unto him as the pattern can only be conformed, *Rom.* viii. 24. *Having predestinated us to be conformable to the image of his Son*; nor is the writing of the law in our heart to be understood, but as it is a *conformity to that law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus*. This is the alone test, and no other we can know of christian morality, which if men shew not that stamp and superscription thereon, let their pretences be ne never so high, it is a counterfeit, and cast in a false mould, when brought to the scripture, and before its light to be tried. And what a strange shape should these put upon holiness, to divide it from its alone fountain Jesus Christ, and the righteousness of the gospel, without which it cannot possibly stand. The corruption of the excellentest things is found to be most noisom; and I am sure no contrivance could be beyond this, to turn so rare an antidote into poison; yea, for what use should the gospel be more, if religion must all be summed up in a practice of moral virtue, and living up to the dictates of reason, according to the light of nature, as we see now openly professed. 2. The scripture expressly shews, that the Lord looks to mens actions in their principles whence they flow, and does accordingly judge thereof; and the *tree must be good*, else the fruit will be as the apples of *Sodom*, for a *corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit*, *Mat.* vii. 18. nor can these *who are in the flesh please God*, *Rom.* viii. 8. And what is more clear than the scripture is here, that there are principles of grace formed in the soul of a christian; an *ingrafting of the word* into the soul, *Jam.* i. 21. and *a real transforming into the same image*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. a being *made partakers of the divine nature*, 2 *Pet.* i. 4. Yea, is there not a writing of the law in the inward man, whence there is a spiritual enlightning of the understanding, and effectual determining of the will unto objects spiritual, and supernaturally good? and if men will deny the truth of regeneration, and a new life formed in the soul; yet can they deny, that these are words of our great

great maſter himſelf, *except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of heaven*, and that it is written *Joh.* iii. 3. Nor debate ſuch a ſcripture there is, 1 *Joh.* iii. 9. that ſhews a *being born of God*, and how theſe have *his ſeed remaining in him*; in which a change no leſs marvelous is thus wrought than if a tranſmutation ſhould be of one nature and kind into another. Why do not ſome prefix to their books, what they ſo viſibly import, a refutation of the written word, when their peculiar aim is to impugn its truth, and turn the great inſtitutions of the goſpel into a cheat and impoſture of fanaticks. 3. Is not this the doctrine of the ſcripture, that *there is an evidence and demonſtration of the ſpirit* with the preached goſpel, 1 *Cor.* ii. 4. by which the ſame truths that are taught by men, are impreſſed and made effectual on the ſoul; and that *the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power?* Yea, is not a moſt dreadful account given of ſuch by the Holy Ghoſt, and expreſly foretold, 2 *Tim.* iii. 4. who having the *form of godlineſs*, ſhould deny the *power thereof*; whatever length ſuch a form may come in the material part of duties, and how plain a verification is of this, the world may ſee this day. 4. If men but read the ſcripture, can they debate what of this truth is ſo clear there, that there is an in-being and union with Jeſus Chriſt, *Joh.* xvi. 1, 2. *Rom.* viii. 1. as the hid ſpring of all a chriſtian's ſupplies, the principle of their ſpiritual enjoyments, without which mens furtheſt endeavours after holineſs cannot poſſibly reach that end; ſince from him muſt *our fruit be found*. *Hoſ.* xiv. 8. and how he is unto his people, not their *righteouſneſs* only, but *ſanctification*, 1 *Cor.* xi. 4. yea, how ſtraitly are theſe co-joined, a meritorious cleanſing from ſin by the blood of Chriſt, and that effectual cleanſing from it by the ſpirit, *Tit.* iii. 5. 5. This does the ſcripture alſo clearly witneſs, that there is another key to open mens heart, than moral perſwaſion, nor can mens *planting and watering* in the uſe of means do further, than there is a divine concurrence therewith to give the encreaſe, 1 *Cor.* iii. 6. and how a phyſical and moral influence do both anſwer to produce one and the ſame effect, *Phillippians* ii. 8. a revealing of *Chriſt in us* by the ſpirit, as well as an objective revelation of him is to us the goſpel; yea, how no conſtraint is put on the ſaints, but what takes the true liberty of the ſoul in its conſent with it, it being a *conſtraint of love*, 2 *Cor.* v. 14. *Cant.* i. 4. 6. Is it not thus clear, that the ſame authority which hath given a rule for all moral duties in the decalogue, hath commanded alſo the manner of their performance; and that no right worſhipping of God can be, but in ſpirit and truth; yea, that ſuch a reduplication ſhould be in the act and doing of duty, to do it for the Lord, to give to a diſciple as a diſciple; and ſo labour, *That whether abſent or preſent we may be accepted of him*; this alſo is ſhewed, *Pſal.* li. 6. that it is *truth in the inward parts* he eſpecially regards; and was it not ſomething elſe than the moral rectitude of an act, or its conformity on the matter to the rule which gave the widow's mite ſuch a preference, made that difference betwixt *Cain* and *Abel*'s offering? I ſhall but add this; if the quality of the principle were not morally eſſential to an action, then *Judas*'s ſorrow might have been true repentance, which was ſo intenſe and real a grief.

2. As the expreſs oppoſition of ſuch doctrine to the ſcripture is undeniable; how manifeſt a contradiction is here alſo to the experience of the ſaints in all ages of the church, who in theſe great truths have put to their ſeal, *That God is true*; wherein ſuch fear not to make him a liar. I need uſe but few words in ſpeaking to this which at ſuch length is held forth elſewhere: and where, I muſt ſay, none can ſeriouſly exerciſe reaſon, but ſees no poſſible

ſallacy or impoſture can be here; but if men muſt try their wit to undeceive the world from ſuch a cheat as ſome pretend this to be, and deny its truth becauſe they are ſtrangers to it themſelves; they will not think it ſtrange that we cannot quit the ſcripture, nor at once deliver up our reaſon and judgment; yea, cannot ſo far contradict both ſenſe and feeling, as to come over to their way: nor need ſuch wonder, it is not eaſy to unteach the doctrine and ſubſtantials of chriſtianity, to theſe who know its truth upon their ſoul; or perſuade a living man that life and motion is but an illuſion of his fancy: for with no leſs certainty do the ſaints know theſe truths, which now are ſo publickly diſowned, 1. That a real intercourſe betwixt Jeſus Chriſt and the ſoul is no imaginary thing, but ſuch as they know to ſurpaſs all the delights men ſeek or can ſuppoſe in a wallowing in ſenſuality; and, That then they are in no dream but awake, and in the greateſt compoſure of mind, when under his ſhadow they have ſat, and his fruit was ſweet to their taſte, when his name as ointment was poured forth, and their heart made to melt within at their beloved's voice; yea, when with the church he hath taken them in unto more ſpecial retirements with himſelf, and there hath given them his love, *Cant.* vii. 9. when his ſenſible embracements under ſome bitter afflicting croſs, hath been ſuch as hath made them forget the ſmart and pain thereof. Oh where do we live? Is it in a chriſtian church? thus to hear that ineſtimable love of Jeſus Chriſt, and theſe bleſſed communications thereof to his people, brought by ſome to the pulpit, and others to the preſs, as a matter of publick ſcoffing and deriſion? Can it be ſaid in the houſe of his friends, ſuch indignity is offered unto him? But tho' theſe ſport at ſuch an appeal as they pretend ſome have made unto the tribunal of God, it is like their confidence may fail to hold up at this rate, when it comes but near the drawing of their laſt breath; or to put religion in their Teſtament, which they fear not to put in their books. 2. This aſſurance have all who know the truth, (oppoſe it who will) to own as a matter of experience, yea, with that certainty, as they know the truth of any thing; That there is a real and ſenſible intercourſe here betwixt the word and the ſoul, by communications of life, ſtrength, joy and light; and how this is no product of enthuſiaſtick fumes, but as they are a manifeſt ſeal and verification of the ſcripture, ſo is the reality thereof as ſure; yea, how marvelous an up-breaking of light is oft found this way, to diſcover the wondrous things of the word, which at other times are hid, and no more within their power, than to cauſe the Sun to ſhine when it is under a dark cloud. 3. It is the witneſs of the ſaints, which from ſure experience they know and give in to the truth; and being of a ſpiritual life, as that which no leſs ſenſibly is demonſtrate, than that men have life and being by nature; which though it is not by birth, nor hath a riſe from natural cauſes, yet hath its vital acts and proper operations as really put forth, as the acts of breathing and moving are by a living man; a life that hath peculiar delights and enjoyments ſuited to its own nature, ſuch as have not the leaſt affinity with the fleſh; yea, a life with as real communications and influences both of light and ſtrength from above, as it is ſure our bodies are influenced with the warmings of the ſun. Some may take the confidence to deride this (as now this way ſeems an advantage in ſuch an age), when a prophane drollery gains more than the moſt ſolid demonſtrations of truth; and no ſuch effectual means conſulted, as that to gain repute, but I may with ſome more confidence ſay, if theſe knew what is the chriſtian's evidence of the reality of ſuch a truth, and what they live and feed on, and truly enjoy, where the world can be no witneſs; this mirth ſhould ceaſe, and debate about the ſolidity of religion, or ſcoff at thoſe who are moſt in earneſt

about

about it. 4. It will be too hard a work for men, to diſpute a chriſtian out of theſe ſenſible taſtes of acceptation and peace with God, the joy of his preſence, and their being impowered to approach unto him, with the liberty of the ſpirit of adoption, who at other times know the ſad reſtraints and bondage their backſlidings hath put them in; nor will it be eaſy to ſhake ſuch about the certainty of God's being the hearer of prayer, and his giving anſwers thereto upon their ſoul, before they have got them in their hand; whoever knew the truth of ſerving him in the ſpirit. I confeſs ſuch a ſtated controverſy may ſeem above ordinary reach, for ſome thus to come forth and perſuade theſe who ſee with their eyes, that their ſight is but an illuſion of the fancy; and what they really hear, is but in a dream; there being no ſuch thing as a viſible object or audible ſound: and yet this muſt paſs for fanaticiſm, that we cannot be forced or hectored out of it, which the chriſtian church hath known, and all the ſaints experienced ſince the time of *Abel* the righteous; but we fear not to own ſuch a challenge. 5. I muſt ſay, they are far from reſpect to enthuſiaſm, or any impulſe not according to the rule, whoſe experience can witneſs that truth of their being inſtructed of the Lord by a ſtrong hand, and his following light on the ſoul with moſt diſcernible power and authority, for ſome piece of work and ſervice he hath called unto; for this they own, and only know in the way of the word, even when in ſome more than ordinary way, they are forced to ſee he teacheth as no man can do; and how eaſy he can make their work to follow, when he goes before to lead, with ſo ſenſible an up-breaking of ſtrength as is found therewith.

3. What a viſible repugnancy to *Reaſon* is here, though men ſhould reject ſcripture and the experience of the ſaints, when ſo much is to inforce by a rational demonſtration on all, who never knew the power and efficacy of grace and energy of the ſpirit on their own ſoul, That here is no falſe ſhew or deceit; theſe being ſo clear, as they can be hid from none. 1. How the cauſe muſt be certain, and no counterfeit, where its peculiar and proper effects are ſo real and known to be ſuch, as from no other cauſe could be produced; ſuch as to make a divorce viſible betwixt mens ſoul and what once was as their right eye, and move with a native unconſtrained motion, to that, from which they had before the greateſt natural averſion; yea, to cauſe a ſatisfied choice of the Croſs and reproach of Chriſt, before all the pleaſures of the earth; ſo that they are found to rejoice in tribulation, and when they are weak, to know the greateſt income of ſtrength: and muſt it not be a divine ſupernatural power that can diſpoſe the heart into a moſt diſcernible tenderneſs and melting at the word, where no natural ſoftneſs of ſpirit could be alledged for this, and cauſe them to tremble with a ſurpriſing terror upon their ſpirit at the hearing of theſe truths which they formerly made ſport at? It is ſure, ſuch an effect alſo cannot be hid from the world, how real a transforming of the ſoul of a chriſtian there is by the power of the word into the ſame image and likeneſs, which is an effect could no more be the product of moral perſwaſion, than he who paints a man's face could put life in ſuch a dead image. 2. If there be no truth and certainty of infuſed principles of grace, and real efficacy of the ſpirit; it is then clear, the moſt obſervable fruit and progreſs of the goſpel ſhould follow the greateſt advantage of gifts and objective helps; when nothing is more obvious, even to reaſon, than the contrary of this, how *the kingdom of God is not in word but in power*; and that the ſimplicity of the goſpel, and *fooliſhneſs of preaching*, as the apoſtle calls it, is ſeen to exceed all human eloquence; yea, how the moſt poliſhed diſcourſe, and greateſt ſtrength of reaſon, does often make but weak preaching with the leaſt real efficacy: And here none can deny, what in all times hath been ſo obvious a

remark

remark of a change by grace wrought on ſome, where the world might ſee no ordinary means, no company, no example, nor any uſual way for inſtruction could be ſubſervient for it, to witneſs there is an immediate teaching of the Lord. 3. It is convincingly obvious to reaſon and ſure, how there is an unſeen power put forth upon the conſcience, in giving it a wound, for which the furtheſt improvement of natural helps or moral perſwaſion can find no cure; yea, ſuch a wound is this ſometimes ſeen to be, as no rack or outward torment is comparable thereto, which no reaſon then can allay, or the moſt convincing arguments and propoſals of the greateſt comforts in the world, but grows upon them the more they ſtrive with it; when in one moment its relief from another cauſe is found to come, and oft ſuch a cure as is no leſs marvelous and demonſtrative of ſome higher power above reaſon to work this, than the wound it ſelf, which all may ſee is ſomething men cannot ſpeak, nor human arguments inforce; but whatever word may then be made uſe of, it is an immediate communication from heaven of light and joy therewith on the ſoul, that makes it effectual. This is too ſad a truth for men to ſport at, who have no ſecurity from his hand, that in all ages have let the world know what the power of the conſcience is. 4. I am ſure none can be in the dark with ſuch a diſcovery, that ſomething there is above morality, or any external helps, as to the truth of a judicial *induration* on the ſoul, when thus, as the word ſhews, it is ſo viſibly ſeen, how many have got beyond the reach of means, yea, diſcernibly preached worſe, more deaf and dead under the greateſt advantages this way, whereby others are enlivened; men cannot but know no outward cauſe is here, nor is it ſo rare a ſight this day within the church, to bring it in queſtion how light and conviction (yea, when all that moral helps can poſſibly do, is put forth to the full) are yet ſeen to reſolve in a further rage and malice againſt the truth, to ſhew it is an immediate ſtroke from God for mens abuſe of light; and whence the wound is, there only can the cure be expected. 5. Though no acceſs ſhould be to convince from ſcripture, yet if ſuch great pretenders to morality will admit, that in ſome caſe the moral certainty of a thing can be ſo far evinced, as to the fulleſt ſatisfying of the mind, then it is ſure, nothing poſſibly can be more than is here, to ſhew it's no dream or impoſture for which ſo great a witneſs is given, from thoſe whoſe truth and moral integrity their adverſaries muſt confeſs, and fear not to credit in any perſonal intereſt; nor will they debate their judgment and capacity to diſcern of things as well as others (leſt they ſhould bring their own in queſtion), and that from outward gain or incitements this way, ſuch have no cauſe to be acted; nor is this a witneſs from ſome few, and in one age, or in a corner of the earth, but is the known record of the church ſince the beginning of time, and of ſuch who have been ready at all times to render *a reaſon of this hope within them*, yea, appeal to the trial of others, even of their greateſt adverſaries, to come and ſee if the efficacy of grace, the inward workings of the Holy Ghoſt upon the ſoul, and that truth of a ſpiritual life, be any falſe ſhew; and is not the world forced to obſerve with what compoſure of ſpirit, and with their dying breath, when on the neareſt approaches to another life, theſe fear not to atteſt this, and go in bearing that teſtimony before the tribunal of God?

4. I offer here to be conſidered, what ſuch doctrine as is now ſpread evidently implies, and whither it tends by undeniable conſequence, ſhould it be received in the church; when thus, 1. We muſt look after ſome other Bible, than the written word, nor can its authority have any weight, as that which is *Regula regulans*, when in ſo expreſs terms the chriſtian faith and the truth of all ſupernatural revelation is here called to the bar of natures light

and

and the dictates of mens reaſon, to be owned or caſt, as it anſwers thereto, which thus ſo expreſly is owned as the alone ſtandard to regulate the whole both of faith and obedience. 2. May not all ſee, its not at the uppermoſt boughs, but at the root that ſuch doctrine ſtrikes, to ſubvert mens ſouls in that greateſt truth of the *uſe* and *efficacy* of grace? yea, what a length they run beyond *Pelagius*, or the *Arminian* doctrine, who do not profeſſedly deny all *efficacious working* of the grace of God, or its being a partial cauſe, though this they admit not antecedaneouſly and independent on the will, but eventually, becauſe of its concurrence therewith; but here is the very being and operation of grace, and of all real influences from God on the ſoul at once cut off, except what ſome would reſtrict as miraculous to the firſt times of the church. 3. Then ſhould there be no other operation aſcribed to God, if this be admitted, for the begetting an increaſe of faith, than what is given to the miniſtry of men, by moral perſwaſion, and in effect the ſame kind of efficiency to ſuch as plant and water, with him who giveth the increaſe. We deny not, this honour have inſtruments, to co-operate with him in their own ſphere: but what horrid blaſphemy ſhould it be, to put ſuch in the ſame ſphere of working and efficiency with the glorious God? 4. Is it not clear, how thus that great relation of the Mediator, as the influential head of his body, which is the church, and his governing by the ſcepter of his ſpirit, is here wholly made void; yea, thus no uſe of prayer for ſpiritual influences, or to look up to heaven for our being ſtrengthned in the inward man; and why do not theſe faſten their reproach alſo on the church's Liturgy, for ſo groſs a cheat in the publick worſhip of God, which in effect they declare this to be that men ſhould pray for the *gracious aſſiſtance of the ſpirit*, and to be *illuminate from above*, when this only is the effect of an enthuſiaſtick ſpirit. 5. And does not the admitting ſuch doctrine moſt expreſly infer, that *Enoch*'s walking with God, *Jacob*'s wreſtling by prayer, and theſe ſenſible returns he had thereof, *Abraham*'s believing againſt hope, and all appearances of reaſon, with theſe frequent changes of *David*'s inward caſe, which we read in the *Pſalms*, were but the illuſions of fancy, and no uſe for ſuch a record in the word this day to the church. I ſhall but further add, how ſtrange a doctrine is here, that makes void the whole intent of the goſpel, and ſcorns to take heaven at ſo low a rate as upon the account of grace, but muſt carry it by triumph, and for this will leave the ſcripture, to find ſome new paſſage, ſince they cannot go in the ſame road, for being ſaved with ſuch they ſo much hate and deſpiſe.

5. Let it be conſidered, what poſſible advantage theſe can pretend to faſten ſuch reproach on the Proteſtant doctrine, and theſe who adhere to it, (againſt whom they thus appear), of enthuſiaſm, or its detracting from reſpect to morality, when they know, and upon their conſcience cannot deny this witneſs, that ſuch, 1. Own no impulſe or internal motions which are not according to the rule, but that it is before this light they offer to come, and to his deciſion who ſpeaks to men by the written word; if theſe diſcoveries, influences and efficacious workings of God on the ſoul, which their experience do witneſs, be not ſuch as they ought to ſeek and look after, by expreſs ſcripture-warrant. 2. How theſe alſo are in greateſt earneſt both to diſcover and guard againſt the appearance of enthuſiaſm, and to keep others off from ſplitting upon any ſuch rock; nor can it be hid, what is their ſtanding witneſs againſt it. 3. It is ſtrange, with what confidence they can own this challenge of their decrying the vigorous improvement of our natural faculties, and want of reſpect to morality, who own the doctrine of the goſpel; when they know none preſs more a practical conformity to the

law, with these engagements that the freedom of the grace of God puts upon men thereto; but this we confess, and must witness with grief, that the morality of some heathens puts to shame the professed piety of many christians in this age, whose walk gives too visible an advantage to question if there be a truth in religion, when so much imposture is found under this cover. 4. It is sure, this can be from no want of light, so publick a decrying of the doctrine of grace, which is turned this day in fashion; when it is so clear, nothing is thence to make the law less strict, or sin less odious; but that here are the strongest inforcements to holiness, and its peculiar intent known to teach us *to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts*; yea, how thence are the clearest inferences for this, that such who have *these precious promises should cleanse themselves*, &c.

I must shut up this with an answer to two queries, that sometime have looked to me with a strange astonishment; the one is, that no error in the judgment so gross or monstrous is found to break up, but does still prove in some measure contagious, and wants not followers within the church. The other is, what can influence so strange a prejudice and opposition at the doctrine of grace and righteousness of the gospel, as is at this day, that men should be found to take so sad a revenge upon themselves, from pure malice at so excellent a truth; when it is sure, these do not think to inforce their doctrine by a convincing witness of such heights of morality in their practice, as they contend for by their pen; but is too obvious, how far in this they comply with the temper of a loose time, to subvert in so far the christian religion, that they may have none at all. For the first of these, it needs not be strange if we consider, 1. That there is no error in the judgment, but what is a work of the flesh, and a most natural suiting thus betwixt a false way and a corrupt heart. 2. Since the greatest contempt of God, which men can witness, is their not receiving the truth when it is clearly offered; it is not strange that a delivering up of their reason and judgment unto strong delusions, should be made to answer thereto, which is certainly one of the greatest strokes from God inflicted here. And is it not clear how these strong incitements from the Devil, with the power and energy thereof, are more observably witnessed upon the mind, than upon the affections; yea, such monstruous productions are this way, as may be more demonstrative of his immediate and mighty working on the soul, than the most horrid acts of prophaness: Thus also the world may see, 'tis the acting over the same scheme, though new actors are brought forth; and in what a round and circle delusion moves, and how old antiquated errors are seen to rise and spread, which former times seem to have buried, For the other query, how so strange an opposition is this day found against the gospel, and the righteousness thereof, none needs to wonder, when it's so clear, first, that the law suits more naturally to men than the doctrine of the gospel. Secondly, That there are degrees of opposition to some points of truth as they are more for the glory of God and promoting of his interest; and therefore it is not strange, so great an assault is here to poison this fountain. 3. What can be more clear, than that account the apostle gives to resolve this, *Rom.* ix. 32. in their case who withstood then the righteousness of faith; *for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone*; and therefore does the Holy Ghost call it, *a submitting to the righteousness of God*, which to nature is as a bowing down below that grandeur and glorying in it self, which it cannot endure to give.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

A third particular upon this ſubject, is ſome ſerious enquiry into theſe grounds, why among theſe who profeſs godlineſs in this age, a through and ſolid confirmation in the truth is now ſo rare, and their perſwaſion of it, ſo little proportioned to the greatneſs of that ſeal and atteſtation, which is this day before them; for it is too manifeſt, which the way of moſt within the church doth witneſs, how doubtful and fluctuating that reliance they have on ſcripture-truths is, as a thing that lies in opinion, and probable conjectures, more than in any degree of certitude. I confeſs it is the peculiar work of the ſpirit to open the eyes, and enlighten the ſoul by an effective illumination, and diſcover to us the evidences of divine truths; nor can the propoſal of the object with the greateſt certainty of evidence, or by moral reaſon, cauſe men diſcern ſpiritual things ſpiritually; ſince there muſt be a ſupernatural light, and ſuiting of the viſive faculty to the object; but is it not clear alſo, how much the obſtruction and culpable cauſe is on our part, and we can only blame our ſelves why ſuch a price for wiſdom is put in mens hands, and no heart to improve it: ſome few of theſe *cauſes* I ſhall here inſtance, the ignorance whereof keeps us from a cure, becauſe the diſeaſe is ſo little known.

Sect. 1. Chriſtians do but little reflect upon their own experience, to know what it means, nor have their conceptions any proportion to the greatneſs of theſe truths that are before them, which is one ſpecial cauſe why ſo much is given to eſtabliſh and ſtrengthen, and yet ſo unanſwerable an improvement for this end; but what is to be underſtood here by ſerious reflection, I muſt ſay, ſeems a rare exerciſe to moſt who profeſs godlineſs in this time: 1. To bring near their thoughts to the truth, for getting another ſight thereof than they formerly had, and their ſpirits more deeply impreſſed with ſo great an import of theſe things which are freely given them of God; how they are no ſhadow nor appearances of things, but moſt viſible realities. 2. To have ſuch a returning of the ſoul upon it ſelf, as to queſtion over again the certainty of theſe truths which are thus made out by experience, yea, as at a ſtand how to credit their own eyes therewith, they are ſo marvelous and great; thus was it with *Solomon*, 2 *Chron.* vi. 18. *But will God in very deed dwell with men upon the earth?* And ſuch was the exerciſe of that poor woman after ſo ſtrange a ſurpriſal of providence, *Gen.* xvi. 13. *Have I alſo looked after him who ſeeth me!* Is this the Lord? And do my eyes truly ſee what I ſee in ſo great a mercy? O what a choice and confirming exerciſe ſhould this be, when a chriſtian can thus ſit alone, and reflect on their experience; It is ſure I exerciſe reaſon, I am not aſleep but awaking; and herein know I am not deceived, that there is a ſpiritual life and immediate fellowſhip with God here, and that I know whom I have believed; yea, except I contradict my ſenſe as well as reaſon, I am ſure, with that God on whoſe word I lean for eternal life, I have been oft ſenſibly refreſhed, and found that in his company which no words can expreſs.

Sect. 2. There is this *cauſe* may be ſeen, the very aims and propoſals of chriſtians are ſo low, and their enquiry not ſuited to ſuch a warrant as they have, *John* xvi. 24. *To ask that their joy may be full:* But theſe great confirmations of the truth which the ſaints have oft had, and yet are communicable in the way of the word, ſeem by moſt of this generation to be laid by as ſome extraordinary things; which doth clearly witneſs, 1. An unacquaintedneſs with the ſcripture, and the extent of many promiſes there, with which chriſtians

chriſtians thus are allowed to trade, for getting up to more high degrees of peace, comfort, and aſſurance of the truth, than moſt have either a heart to ſeek, or faith to credit: O what a depth this is, that will never be fully opened up, until we be in heaven, what it is to have the written word ſo near, and what this might be to a chriſtian here by the way. 2. This ſhews how little a further growth in the faith of aſſent is known, and that giving all diligence to the full aſſurance of hope, as that with which our growth in love patience, humility, is indiſſolubly linked, and keeps a proportion. 3. There is little coming up to that practice, where ſuch great things from the Lord have been ſhewed to his people in former times; *Our fathers truſted in thee, and were helped*, Pſal. xxii. 3. Theſe had indeed a marvelous ſeal, and rare confirmations of the truth, which ſeem ſtrange to us; not that they were out of the way of the promiſe, but becauſe the ancient holineſs of theſe times is ſo little known. How rare a practice is it to believe, to follow the Lord fully, and have a large venture in his hand, and what ſuch a wreſtling, and ſupplication with weeping, that is *Hoſ.* xii. 4. by which they had power with God, and did prevail; and therefore are many rare mercies withheld from us, which lye hid in the word.

Sect. 3. It may be ſeen, how eaſie an aſſent moſt find to the ſcripture; and the church is no leſs ruined this day by credulity, than profeſſed atheiſm; which is too evident a cauſe why ſo many know not what it is to believe, or be concerned about ſuch a thing, for thus they take all on truſt, are carried in the croud, not diſquieted with theſe aſſaults a ſerious chriſtian is oft preſſed with; yea, come not that length to queſtion the certainty of the ground whereon they build, if it be not to unſettle themſelves more than to confirm. Oh! what a ſad ſight may this be, when it is no leſs than the venture of an immortal ſoul for eternity, about which if men be deceived, they are deceived indeed; and it is not ſeen, what a fatal conjunction oft is betwixt credulity and impoſture, where the deceiver and ſuch as find it eaſie to believe, meet together in the ſame road.

Sect. 4. Though from reaſon there is a ſufficiency of evidence to convince, yet is it clear, that ſomething farther is indiſpenſibly required for a firm aſſent to the truth; which is to know the truth and reality of the goſpel by experience on the ſoul; for without this there can be no cure for atheiſm, nor can it be known there is a truth in that religion they profeſs, when within themſelves there is ſuch a contradiction to it; it is indeed ſtrange, what aſſent theſe can give to the ſupernatural truths of the word, which though nothing is more ſure in it ſelf, yet from them is a falſe witneſs, in ſo far as it is againſt their own knowledge, whilſt their conſcience muſt ſay, the ſcripture was never that to them, that it declares it ſelf to be, and that witneſs which it bears of the life of the ſpirit, the earneſt of heaven, an immediate fellowſhip with God, and that the preached goſpel is the power and wiſdom of God, was yet never to them a reality, but as herein they confeſs God to be true, they make themſelves liars, and contradict their own light.

Sect. 5. Is not this viſible before us? How atheiſm is now turned contagious beyond the rate of former times; and ſeems to be the great aſſault peculiarly ſuited to this age, where the power of darkneſs moſt appears; a time when that deſign was never more on foot to have the truth kept doubtful, that it be more a problem, and matter of opinion, than of certainty, and ſo much endeavour to caſt reproach on the way of the Lord; yea, a time when there is a ſore ſhaking by contrary doctrine, the growth of ſcandal, and obvious blots on the profeſſion of godlineſs, ſo that many are in hazard to reſolve their faith in an uncertainty of all principles, and clearly loſe any aſſured perſwa-

ſion

ſion of the truth of religion; but as this is witneſſed, and one of the ſad appearances of the time, it gives ſolid ground alſo to hope. 1. For a further eſtabliſhment chriſtians ſhall be led up to, before this generation paſs. 2. This ſome great diſcoveries and confirmations of the truth are yet to break up, and ſuch a brightneſs, that will be as marvelous as the ſtrange darkneſs over the church hath been; and that the atheiſm of this age ſhall have a cure, though we may fear in ſome ſharp and extraordinary way, when ordinary means for this end have been ſo ineffectual.

SECT. 6. Is not here too evident a cauſe, whence ſo much dark and fluctuating aſſent is to the truth, when ſuch confirmations of its certainty are in our ſight; they are few find it a great buſineſs to be eternally ſaved, and have their ſoul kept under ſuch a weight, to whom the thoughts of a heaven or hell are brought near, as undoubted realities, betwixt which there is no middle ſtate after death, but knows they muſt ſhortly be the inhabitants either of the one or the other; for if ſuch a deep impreſſion of this were on mens ſouls, could they poſſibly be ſo unconcerned in their being ſure of the foundation whereon they have ſo great a venture. Such are indeed a rare ſight in this age, whoſe working out their *ſalvation is, with fear and trembling*; and moſt ſo far ſeem to be loſt in a throng of other things, that this greateſt queſtion which can occur in all their life, *If they be born again?* is laid aſide until they be ready to die. Oh! hath our light thus put us out of ſerioufneſs, and giving all diligence, which is ſo indiſpenſibly required of theſe who mind heaven; will gifts, and an high repute in the church, or a fair ſhew in the fleſh, be a ſure evidence to cauſe rejoycing, when once it comes to die? This is a ſad ſubject, and I muſt ſay, if the characters of godlineſs the ſcripture hath given were ſeriouſly pondered, there was never an age wherein more profeſſors are like to come ſhort of heaven, and be found in a fundamental deluſion about their ſtate than this is; for which ſome ſad evidences I ſhall here offer.

1. That looſe conception many have got of religion, which they have framed in their own mould, ſo as to find an eaſie cure for all their doubts, and ſhift off the neceſſity of fear, tenderneſs and diligence in making ſure of eternal life, and thus are at work to have ſuch a latitude in their principles, as may ſuit the ſtrait and narrow gate which leadeth to life unto that liberty they take in their practice. 2. May we not ſee how far it is become a matter of wit and invention to be chriſtians, and with what ſingular advantage many have learned to act handſomely ſuch a part; as if divinity were rather a ſcience to be learned by rules of art, than a matter of ſenſe and feeling, or ſome exquiſite image to pleaſe their eye, but ſuch as can put forth no vital acts. 3. Are not theſe times ſuch, wherein light hath in a ſtrange manner out-gone conſcience and tenderneſs, and that which the apoſtle calls the form of knowledge, and of truth is like to ruin many, *Rom.* iii. So that it is rare to find a warming heat with a large profeſſion, ſuch as can make it convincing to others, and commends it to their conſcience. 4. It is now a time wherein religion is remarkably enlarged in the notion, but oh how much abridged in the practice, even from what it hath been in times of greater ignorance. I muſt ſay, that length many in this age have come in the *Theory* of practical godlineſs, is like to be a ſad ſnare to help ſome to periſh with the more confidence and quiet. 5. It may be too obvious, there hath not been an age of the church wherein profeſſors ſeemed further off from getting good of the goſpel, and leſs acceſs to reprove, or for a faithful freedom with moſt, than is now; but ſuch is the ſore and diſeaſe of many, as cannot endure to be touched, and therefore it is no wonder that God ſhould make ſo

ſharp an application by the rod, of that which men will not apply to themſelves from the word, or bear from others. 6. How ſad an evidence of this time is it, when the religion of ſo many may be ſeen to have begun at their practice, before it once begun at the heart, and thence is ſo eaſie to be chriſtians in company, and in publick duties with others, who know little what it is to be ſuch alone, and be ſerious in theſe more retired exerciſes of religion, which keeps the cloſeſt communication with the vital parts of chriſtianity; but it is ſure, the greateſt part of a chriſtians work is that which is leaſt ſeen, and hid from the eyes of others. 7. It may be ſaid, there hath not been a time wherein more were like to periſh at an *almoſt* in chriſtianity, and with hid reſerves in their heart in a profeſſed following of the Lord, than is now; and that there is a right hand and right eye, which e'er men who profeſs the truth adventure to quit, they will rather hazard all, whence is there ſuch a darkening of light, and extenuating controverſies in a ſuffering time, when it may be ſeen, it is not ſo much a matter of dark difference as the ſcruple lies at the croſs in general, that for ſuch a ſtep in the narrow gate they muſt have an exception. 8. I ſhall but add this very ſad evidence of the hazard of profeſſors in this age, that many are like to pleaſe themſelves with ſuch a mould of piety as cometh ſhort of moral righteouſneſs; and lay aſide that obſervance of the ſecond table, which is ſo indiſpenſibly required of all the followers of God. O! what an amazing thing is this! as if this were not an eſſential part of holineſs, *without which none ſhall ſee the Lord*; and a part of theſe weightier things of the Law, which is to *do juſtice, love mercy*, as well as *walk humbly with God*; there is not under the *New Teſtament* a more dreadful threatning than againſt this, 1 *Theſ.* iv. 6. That no man over-reach his brother, for God is the avenger of all ſuch, and hath that mark put upon it when it is found among ſuch who profeſs themſelves his people, that it overpaſſeth the deeds of the wicked, *Jer.* v. 28. yea, I muſt ſay, in nothing could the height of malice againſt Jeſus Chriſt act more to bring the truth under reproach, and cauſe the prophane world blaſpheme, than for any to perſonate religion for a cover to ſuch a practice.

CHAP. VI.

IN the laſt place, this great truth of the verification of the ſcripture would be conſidered as it leads *into practice*, and that ſingular advantage this way might be found, if we know how to improve it; ſince this is a talent for trade, not for contemplation; yea, it may be ſaid with a ſure warrant, this is the greateſt in order to a chriſtians comfort and eſtabliſhment which he can trade with within time; which in ſome following *Uſes* I ſhall briefly touch.

SECT. 1. Thus ſhould every one of the ſaints purſue a certainty of his own about the truth, that the written word is the teſtimony of the living God, which is indiſpenſibly neceſſary for him to have, elſe he can have none at all; ſince this is a perſonal buſineſs, where all muſt prove their own work; for clearing of which, we have to conſider. 1. How rare and ineſtimable a thing this certainty which I call a chriſtian's own, is to difference from what moſt of ordinary profeſſors in theſe times ſatisfie themſelves with. 2. How this way it is to be reached. As to the firſt, It is ſuch, 1. That cauſeth one to rejoice within himſelf, and have a feaſt there whereof none elſe can partake, which hath no dependance on others, but is alone betwixt God and the ſoul. 2. It is ſuch as ſhould oblige him to ſeal the truth, though there were none elſe, and is ſufficient to put his ſoul to reſt in a ſatisfied reliance on the word, though he have no incitement from the example of others, and be caſt in a time wherein religion

is

is every where ſpoken againſt. 3. Such a certainty is this of the truth as hath been tried by temptation, and hath not wanted a previous conflict e'er they came by it; yea, lies ſo near them, as to be a ſerious exerciſe on their ſoul to know the ſolidity of that ground whereon ſo great an intereſt muſt be built; and thus the greater aſſaults there are, it is found the way to a further length in eſtabliſhment. 4. It is ſuch wherewith theſe are not eaſily ſatisfied who have once got it; but it is ſome part of their continued work to know the Lord, by following on to know him in his faithfulneſs in the word, that he is ſurely that to them which he hath declared himſelf to be; and what a viſible impreſs there is of his truth in his providences towards others. 5. This is ſuch as brings unſpeakable ſupport in a dark caſe, and helps the chriſtian to rejoice in the promiſe, when no appearances are how the performance ſhould come, yea to a ſatisfied rowling over on God to reconcile his word and works when they ſeem to juſtle, and thus oppoſe what he hath ſaid, to what he hath done; knowing theſe can be in no real contradiction to one another. 6. So excellent a thing is this certainty of a chriſtians own, as leads into an unſpeakable repoſe and quiet of the ſoul in that laſt venture for eternity, when on the faithfulneſs of God in his word he muſt lay the dead grip (which we ſee how dark a buſineſs it is to many) when thus ſo great an earneſt he finds in his hands of theſe truths, the accompliſhment whereof goes beyond death, which are the reſurrection of the dead, and a being for ever with God; whoſe ſenſible preſence, and familiar approaches to the ſoul, a near converſe with him, yea his very immediate help from heaven in a day of ſtrait, he knows ſo well here by the way, to be a ſure performance of the word, and by marvelous confirmations thereof hath oft proved.

2. Let us conſider, of what ſingular uſe theſe near approaches of a chriſtian to know the word, to know and be further confirmed of the faithfulneſs of God there in the providence of his life, ſhould be, for ſuch a certainty: 1. That this is ſomething not reached by any tranſient glances of light, or ſome preſent flaſh of affection; but here muſt be a ſolid and rational arguing from the evidence of the premiſes to the truth of the concluſion; that ſince he is ſure, *The way of the Lord is perfect, and his word tried*, *Pſal.* xviii. 30. which ſo oft he hath put to an eſſay, and in his experience had ſo many perſonal returns of its truth, he can of nothing be more certain, than he is of its being a ſafe ground for adventuring on. 2. Thus is the Lord's ſeal to his truth made diſcernible, and ſuch a ſecret token and mark given thereof, which none can counterfeit. 3. Thus is ſo enriching a trade to be followed, as might every day lay ſome new ſtrengthening remarks in our way of the Lord's being God, and his unſpotted faithfulneſs in the word whereon we have ſo great a venture.

Sect. 2. There is this *uſe* which neceſſarily follows from the former, and a ſingular advantage chriſtians ſhould make of the preſent ſubject, with theſe clear diſcoveries before them of the ſcriptures verification, *for a through and ſolid determining their ſtate in Chriſt*; and that thus they may get up to ſome higher degrees of aſſurance thereof, than what moſt ſatisfie themſelves with. When to eaſe the chriſtians work in this trial, and in multiplying marks, here is a ſhort abridgment of all he may have at his hand, to know the certainty of the word, and theſe great ſupernatural truths there, by experience on his own ſoul; ſo as not in the dark, and with a doubtful aſſent, but from what he hath both ſeen and felt, he can put to this ſeal, *That God is true* therein. We know, until the ſaints be fully poſſeſſed of heaven, nothing can bring a joy beyond this, *to be throughly aſſured of their being for ever there, and in his preſence where there is fulneſs of joy*, they ſhall paſs the long ages of eternity;

nity; nor can any be too ſerious and concerned for making this ſure; yet it cannot be denied, but ſome exceſs even here is this day in the road of practical divinity, and theſe voluminous enlargements about ſigns and evidences of grace (in which much cautious reſpect needs to be taken about the various ſizes and degrees of growth amongſt chriſtians and viciſſitudes of their inward caſe) yea, by extending theſe in ſo different a mould and ſhape, as hath tended to darken and render perplex the way to ſome, more than for ſolid quiet of their ſpirits. The portraiture of a chriſtian is ſuch, as none can draw to one model, but with reſpect to the infancy of ſome, as well as the further age and eſtabliſhment of others. What I intend here, is but a ſhort touch only for clearing this, how the chriſtians way and method of a trial neceſſarily lies, in a ſerious purſuance to know the truth, and have more near converſe with its verification on the ſoul, as the beſt way to know their ſtate, and clearing up of evidences for heaven; and how theſe are ſo cloſely linked, as the one muſt bring forward the other; for which ſome few things I ſhall firſt premiſe, that by moſt of profeſſed chriſtians, I muſt ſay, ſeem to be little underſtood.

1. That there is none but in ſome meaſure muſt know a practical converſe with the word and its accompliſhment, if they be not ſtrangers to the very eſſentials of chriſtianity; nor can there poſſibly be a true idea and image of godlineſs impreſſed on the ſoul of any, but as it anſwers to the ſcripture, and preſents its lively impreſs thereon.

2. That theſe hid marks, whence the ſaints know the ſcripture to be the word of God, are ſuch as with the ſame evidence anſwer to determine their ſtate and being in Chriſt; yea ſuch, that by looking in on inherent qualifications, none can ſolidly argue to the certainty of grace from them, further than they know the certainty of the word, and its accompliſhment on them. Now what ſingular advantage ſhould a chriſtian thus find, when by this thread, as it were, in his hand, and ſo ſure a rule and line of trial, he can follow his intereſt in Chriſt, and have the ſight thereof kept clear by that undoubted intereſt and propriety he hath in the word, from its ſure accompliſhment to him; the want whereof, is it not too obvious a cauſe of ſuch darkneſs and confuſion as attends many in theſe enquiries they have about their ſtate.

3. Though it is undeniable that the world ſees at a diſtance, and cannot get by ſome convincing witneſs of the ſcriptures taking place, both in providences of mercy, and theſe clear inſtances in which the Lord is known by the Judgment he executes; yet do they not know, nor can poſſibly reach the chriſtian's trade here, which lies hid and deep in the ſoul, in that ſenſible converſe theſe have with the word, and its continued verification to them.

4. Doth not the word ſhew, what the ſaints muſt know by experience, how cloſe theſe keep together in one tye; as we ſee them conjoined, *John* iii. 33. That ſuch who truly *believe*, know alſo what a *putting their ſeal* to the truth is; ſince they are not only convertible terms, in ſo far as the one cannot be wanting, where the other really is, but ſuch that the certainty of the one muſt be cleared up by the other. I deny not, a dogmatical faith is in ſome meaſure reached, when not ſaving; but it may be clearly evinced, that no true ſolid aſſent is to ſupernatural truths, without experience and a knowing the power and efficacy thereof on the ſoul; nor can there be a fiducial application and recumbency on the truth, where this is wanting.

5. Though it is too ſadly known, as one cauſe of ſuch dark evidence moſt have of their ſtate, that the ſpirit of ſanctification runs ſo low, and untenderneſs in their walk; I muſt ſay, this alſo may be no leſs clear, which is ſo little ſolid perſwaſion of the certainty of the truth; and a ſad miſtake in the method moſt take, by ſeeking to ſecure a right and intereſt there, without a

ſerious

ſerious purſuance to be ſolidly founded thereon. And is not here the riſe of ſuch heſitation, and a trembling gripe ſo many have in parting with time, and that great venture of the ſoul on the promiſe; their work hath been ſo little by the way to have their adherence to the truth ſtrengthned by *knowing in whom they believed*, which made it ſo eaſy to the apoſtle to put over himſelf and intereſts on that ſecurity.

6. This ſeems to be little conſidered, in ſuch enquiries ſome have about their inward ſtate, and whether they believe or not; how it is much greater to believe the truth in general, than any perſonal application thereof can be in their caſe; for which the apoſtle clearly reaſons, *Rom.* viii. 32. *He that ſpared not his own ſon, how will he not with him give us all things?* for if we be aſſured of that in which the greateſt difficulty of faith lies, muſt it not by clear conſequence follow, that what concerns our intereſt is but as a ſtraining at a gnat, when ſuch a thing is once ſwallowed; and where a chriſtian hath got this length, to believe the teſtimony of God is ſuch whereon with greateſt ſecurity he can repoſe his ſoul; perſonal evidences cannot then ſtay behind, if there be a ſerious endeavour in their eſſays after holineſs. For the greateſt wonder is here to believe the truth of the goſpel, that *he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all who come unto him*, more than his ſaving of me, and it may be too obvious as the cauſe whence the laſt is obſtructed, from ſo ſmall an eſtabliſhment in the firſt.

Having premiſed theſe, for clearing a truth of ſuch weight, I ſhall offer ſome things to evince the neceſſity of a near and practical converſe with the word in its accompliſhment on the ſoul, as that without which no effectual acceſs can be to clearing up of evidences, and certainty of our ſtate in Chriſt; it is ſo manifeſt, where this is wanting none can diſcern, 1. The *truth and ſolidity of grace*, how it is no caſual thing, but ſuch as moſt convincingly anſwers the word, and is its native product; which if it be not diſcerned, the one half of a chriſtians evidence, from the *truth of holineſs* and *fruits of the ſpirit* is then kept out of ſight; for whatever is ſeen of the being of grace in its *effects*, yet does he not ſee it in the *cauſe*, and how in that alone channel of the word and promiſe its conveyance is to the ſoul; yea, without this could none comfortably reflect on the *things freely given him of God*, as knowing them to be ſuch; and on his own experience of the work and efficacy of the ſpirit, if he cannot diſcern the clear making out of the ſcripture there.

2. Without this could none know, what ſo rare and divine an art means, (than which I may ſay, in a mediate way, nothing can be of more uſe for trial of a chriſtian ſtate), *to compare ſpiritual things with ſpiritual*, ſuch as the actings and influences of the ſpirit with the word, inherent evidences with the written promiſe; nor according to this can he diſcern a divine efficacious concurrence meet him in the way of duty; and how the *original* which is without in the word, and its tranſcript within on the ſoul, are one and the ſame; for what are the rareſt inward qualifications upon the matter, and how little ſhould they amount to a clear diſtinguiſhing evidence, if this *comparing work* of a chriſtian be not known, how to ſet things one againſt another, ſo as each be under its proper aſpect.

3. It may be clear, without this no other converſe with the Bible could let a chriſtian know, what the *truth's dwelling within him* is, of how much thereof hath been turned into a practical hiſtory, and in ſuch a character writ over upon his heart, that he is ſure angels nor men could never have done; nor can he ſee how the ſame *ingrafted* and living truth (by as ſure a demonſtration as ever was of the motion of the blood) makes its way through

the veins and conduits of a chriſtians walk, for putting forth of vital acts there; in a right diſcerning of which, ſhould that great demonſtration be convincingly clear, that ſeems as a ſtrange and dark thing to many, what it is to be the *declared epiſtle of Chriſt, written not with ink, but the ſpirit of the living God; not on tables of ſtone, but in fleſhly tables of the heart*, 2 Cor. iii. 3.

4. Without this could none of the ſaints ſee their right and claim to the promiſe cloathed with the actual poſſeſſion thereof; which is the earneſt here of that inheritance above; but where this is clear, what a marvelous evidence comes therewith, to the furtheſt quieting of the ſoul; when thus a chriſtian reflects, and can reaſon with himſelf, what of the ſcripture and theſe great ſupernatural truths there, which the world knows not, he hath now made his *own*, and not in the offer and promiſe only, but in real performances.

5. Is it not clear, without ſome near and ſerious converſe with the ſcripture, in the certainty of its verification, none could know the ſeal of the ſpirit; which though ſometimes it is ſo immediate and over-powering a teſtimony as ſilenceth all doubts and fears, when it hath no reſpect to any work of grace, or inherent evidences; yet even then it is *the ſeal of the ſpirit of the promiſe*, *Eph.* i. 13. and ſuch that cannot be underſtood, but as a ſure accompliſhment of the word.

6. Let us but conſider, what chriſtian aſſurance is (I mean ſuch as in a mediate way can be reached), and is it not a practical Syllogiſm, where the firſt propoſition muſt ſtill be a ſcripture-truth, and concludes from theſe ſure and undoubted experiments they have thereof on their ſoul? for thus a chriſtian ſolidly reaſons; Can I debate more my being for ever in heaven with God, who do ſo certainly experience what the ſcripture has given as an infallible ſign of the truth of another world, and a being entred into it here; ſo as to breath another air, and from a ſtate of darkneſs to be taken into a *marvelous light*, which once it is ſure I knew not, nor could credit its reality on report; yea, a light by which I diſcern the truth of ſpiritual objects to be as real as I ſee theſe heavens and earth by the light of the ſun, and am taught the way of ſenſible converſe therewith. Now when thus he reflects, does not there meet in one demonſtration, the two greateſt things can be deſired until he be in heaven, which are, the *certainty of the written word*, and of his *ſtate and being in Chriſt*; and thus ſee, how they anſwer other, and each ſo indiſſolubly tied, that no clear ſatisfying evidence can be of the laſt, but in a ſerious purſuit of the firſt.

Sect. 3. Such is this ſubject, and the ſerious *improvement* thereof, as might lead us in to know that notable art of religion more in its *practice*, which may be truly called *Scientia architectonica*, an art for extracting out of all occurrences of the time, and the ſtrangeſt providences, what ſhould tend to our further fixing in the truth, and make it eaſy and clear, how to reduce the works of God unto the written word; yea, to reſolve his judgments through the earth in their true cauſe and original, which I muſt ſay from trial, is one of the rareſt of eſſays men could purſue againſt Atheiſm, and for aſſuring our heart more of the being and faithfulneſs of God, when thus it's ſeen, how all the lines of providence lead from the ſcripture, and return hither again, and do moſt viſibly begin and end there; ſo that whither a diſcerning chriſtian looks, yet cannot he look off this, though he go from one creature to another, and from one piece of the work of God to another; but all ſtill meets with a moſt obvious tendency to make this demonſtration clear, *That God is true*, For my ſelf, I ſeriouſly profeſs, when ſuch dark clouds are now caſting up, and amazing occurrences, ſo many things to imbitter the world, this is the

moſt

moſt ſtrengthning diſcovery I find within time, that ſuch clear glances of the *faithfulneſs of God* there are, and theſe ſo convincingly ſhewed forth amidſt the greateſt darkneſs and confuſions, as leaves no acceſs to debate the certainty thereof; for nothing elſe I ſee but what might help to cruſh and make faint, if this were not ſo ſure, *God hath ſpoken in his holineſs*, and nothing hitherto hath failed thereof; what was the word of *Luther*, *Pene deſperaſſem niſi Chriſtus eſſet caput Eccleſiæ* might we not now ſay, if the ſame truth ſtood not good to us, and that the ſaddeſt of events brings ſo much in them, to ſtrengthen, and be a further ſeal to the word: But now is the church ſore toſſed, we can alſo ſee the need thereof, and when ſuch rage and hatred there is againſt godlineſs, that it gets no worſe entertainment than was foretold. Is the truth avowedly oppoſed and born down? there doth the ſcripture take place. Is it reproached? it behoved ſo to be. Yea, is it by ſubtilty and under a cover of friendſhip aſſaulted? this alſo is ſome part of its own accompliſhment. Do we not ſee, wickedneſs is ſtill the ſame? and that it is the ſame ſpirit now acts in the worſt of men that was in former ages? which ſhould no leſs tend to a confirming us of the certainty of the word, than the truth of holineſs; have we ſeen any ſuch dark hours as did ever want a witneſs to that bleſſed promiſe of a watching providence over the church? but when he ſmites with the one hand, he is ſtill found to uphold by the other; and no ſuch concurrence of things to cauſe grief, but ſomething as remarkably ſet againſt it, to be matter of joy and encouragement in the Lord; nor in any time is ſuch poiſon vented, but the very ſame time it is found to bring an antidote with it, and the greateſt aſſaults againſt the truth made ſubſervient for her further triumph. Now it is ſure, this is no dream, no romance, or a conjectural thing, but what in the greateſt compoſure of ſpirit, each chriſtian can diſcern and know its truth to be as undeniable and clear, as it is certain there is a ſun that ſhines in the firmament. What an ineſtimable advantage is here, if we knew how to improve it, that under all the varieties of providences within time, we may go in and out and find paſture, and thus get our faith more ſtrengthned, in ſeeing how men are forced to promote God's deſign by oppoſing it, and in reſiſting his will to fulfill it; the ſmalleſt things made ſubſervient to great purpoſes, when the moſt promiſing appearances are blaſted; how moſt are every-where thronged about perſonal intereſts, and their own things taking them up, whilſt the holy God does moſt convincingly turn all for his end. Yea, if we knew how to follow this great diſcovery, we ſhould convincingly ſee the greateſt ſurpriſals of providence, which upon no principles of reaſon men could fore-ſee, or any connection betwixt the means and ſuch a product; how exactly they anſwer the word, and are a ſeal thereto. I ſhall but add, how it is not more obvious, that to every creature, faculty, and operation, there is as it were a thread faſtned, by which one may follow up and ſee *that God is*, than it is diſcernible here, how cloſe a conjunction is betwixt the word and each piece of his work, yea, every ſtep of providence in the earth; whereby we may know, he is that which the ſcripture declares him to be.

Sect. 4. This peculiar advantage ſhould chriſtians make of ſo great a diſcovery of the *faithfulneſs of God*, and how nothing fails of all that he has ſpoken in his word; for adventuring with a more full ſecurity on theſe *rare politicks of the Bible*, which concern mens intereſts within time; yea, thus to ſteer their courſe under many viciſſitudes of this life, by ſuch maxims of divine policy, which can neither err nor poſſibly admit a fallacy or miſtake. I muſt touch this a little, it is ſo ſtrange how ſmall weight even with moſt of profeſſed chriſtians theſe ſeem to have; and whatever reſpect they witneſs

witneſs to this bleſſed record, in taking it as their ſecurity for a life to come, or any ſpiritual intereſts; yet is it not ſeen, how viſible an exception is made in their reliance on the word, for things of this life, but they will needs ſtrive to be wiſe in their actings, like the men of the reſidue of the nations, and have the eternal and unchangeable truths of God come down to their mould and reaſonings; which is an atheiſm too manifeſtly owned everywhere. Oh what can this mean, to half the ſcripture of God in ſuch a manner, as to adventure with ſome profeſſed ſecurity, on what is there for an eternal intereſt, but on other principles and contrivances go for their concernments within time; yea, ſo far allow themſelves to lay this aſide, as that which they think cannot poſſibly ſuit the poſture and condition of their outward affairs: But for clearing this truth, I ſhall firſt offer ſome things to ſhew with what demonſtrative evidence a chriſtian may adventure here on the certainty of ſuch infallible rules, for all his temporal intereſts, as well as theſe that concern an after ſtate; and next offer ſome particular inſtances, where this demonſtration may be more clearly underſtood.

I. Can we admit a divine authority of the ſcripture, and not ſee how the faithfulneſs of God ſtands good for every line and ſyllable there; yea, that theſe rules it holds forth, muſt be no leſs ſure for the leaſt of a chriſtian's intereſt, than for an eternal ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt.

2. Is not this beyond all poſſible debate, how great an intereſt mens outward lot and concernments have in the written word, that though no reſpect unto the command, principles of ſelf-love, and the intereſt of *gain* as well as of *duty* ſhould oblige to a cloſe adherence thereto.

3. Though it ſeems as a romance to many, yet muſt we either quit the ſcripture, or credit this, that the moſt infallible rules for one to raiſe his fortune, and enſure a deſtiny that can controul the ſtars, are given forth there, where that evidently is found, *Sapiens dominabitur aſtris, & quo modo unuſquiſque faber poteſt eſſe fortunæ ſuæ.*

4. Are not theſe rules alſo known and tried, ſo as the experience of all, who have followed the way of the Lord, did yet never fail to witneſs.

5. And is it not clear, how ſuch rules there are, of that univerſal truth, as in no time the contrary was ever ſeen to be true; but the greateſt ſun-ſhine on mens wicked devices, and their contrivements of ſinful policy, are ſtill ſeen in the cloſe to have ſome ſad and tragick reſult; yea, that the bringing theſe to paſs, hath moſt convincingly tended for their further ruin.

6. Is not the true cauſe viſibly writ forth here, whence the falling out of events is ſo frequently ſeen to be croſs to all ordinary rules and method of ſecond cauſes, and the wiſe diſappointed in their work, for attaining ſuch ends, as could not but be expected to follow thereon, from appearances to reaſon; yea, that ſuch fruitleſs inquiries, with anxious and inordinate toil, the ſad miſcarriage of moſt deſired and deeply contrived projects, is ſo uſual a ſight in the world, ſo as mens hearts are ſometimes ready to deſpair of all their labours under the ſun; that the ſcripture hath ſo little credit in their private concerns, but will ſteer their courſe by ſome other compaſs for attainment of what they intend.

7. Is not this with greateſt evidence demonſtrable, how practical prudence is the native effect of piety; and what helps to make one more a chriſtian, hath a neceſſary tendency therewith to make him more wiſe; and to theſe rare accompliſhments of true policy; when theſe are ſo clear: How much it helps to get command over the heart, and the moderation of paſſions. 2. For one to know and diſcern his own way, which is to be wiſe at home, and in what his neareſt concerns lie, *Prov.* xiv. 8. 3. To improve the preſent pro-

providence, and every change of his lot, for ſome further gain, ſo as he can follow his intereſt, by abaſement as well as abounding, and get up by that which ſeems moſt to depreſs him. 4. To have a more clear view of the conſequence and future iſſue of things, by knowing how to diſcern time and judgment, *A wiſe man foreſeeth the evil, and hides himſelf*, *Prov.* xxiii. 3. 5. Such alſo is its true tendency, to cauſe that temperature and counterpoiſe in the ſoul, amidſt theſe continued viciſſitudes here, as he can rejoice with fear, and have his greateſt confidence under guard of a watchful circumſpection. 6. Is it not evidently found, in ſo far as one walks by theſe rules, how his hand worketh by the guidance of his heart, and does then act dextrouſly? which *Solomon* that great obſerver, did ſo much regard, *Eccleſ.* x. 2. *A wiſe man's heart is at his right hand, but a fools heart is at his left.* Yea, then is light found to ſhine on his paths; for a more clear and eaſy getting through theſe incumbrances which are found ſo diſtracting, and ready to ſink the ſpirit of others.

8. For ſuch as lay the whole ſcripture aſide, and have no ſuch weight upon them of an eternal ſtate, It is not ſtrange this ſhould have no credit for their intereſts within time; but is not here matter of aſtoniſhment, what reſpect and confidence men witneſs, for adventuring upon part of the Bible, who viſibly ſhew they have no confidence for the other? Can ſuch be in earneſt to improve ſupernatural truths there for ſpiritual things, who ſee nothing of its uſe on this account, what a ſure trade they might drive in order to their temporal intereſts, (yea, whilſt they converſe not with the very notion of ſuch a thing)? I muſt ſay, no reaſon can comprehend this, how principles of ſelf-love ſhould have ſo little influence on men; nor can it be anſwered, but by admitting one of theſe two, that either the ſcripture is not truly owned and believed by moſt of profeſſed chriſtians as a ſecurity, on which they can adventure their heaven; ſince the ſame aſſurances are there by the God of truth, for mens intereſts here in the way; or that ſuch knowingly betray the end they propoſe to themſelves in their labours under the ſun, and act in direct oppoſition thereto, by ſo ſtrange a neglect, and laying aſide of the ſcripture.

Having premiſed theſe, for giving light to ſo concerning a truth; let us but clearly ſtate ſo great a duty, as the practical uſe and improvement of the word is in a temporal caſe, and with reſpect to our preſent intereſts in this life, as well as theſe which are eternal; that we may ſee the infallible connection which is betwixt the one and the other; *for he hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good*, as well as what is juſt, and where the ſureſt method and way lies for one to ſeek himſelf, and be wiſe for their own private intereſt; yea, to attain and enjoy an outward lot with unſpeakable more advantage, than moſt let themſelves know, to prevent diſappointments, with ſore and ſtinging croſſes, that may be ſeen come not out of the duſt, but are a product, that all might diſcern from the word, ſuch means they choſe to themſelves muſt bring forth. It is clear, that the ſame light which ſhews the way for being eternally ſaved, lets men alſo ſee an exact and infallible method, in all their concerns within time, and for ſuch a conduct as they may *walk ſurely*, by rule, and not at an adventure for this end; the ſlighting whereof hath cauſed many with ſore toil ſow the wind unto themſelves. I come now to inſtance ſome of theſe rare *politicks* and higheſt *principles* of wiſdom given to us in the written word, in living up to which, one may as it were chuſe his own fortune; I offer theſe, which are ſuch as we may fear more it ſhall ceaſe to be day and night, ſeed-time and harveſt, than that any of theſe fail.

1. *Principle, That to ſecure the ſucceſs of our way, in the appointed uſe of means, nothing is ſo effectual as a through commitment thereof to the*

Lord; as it is clear, *Pſ.* xxxvii. 5. *Prov.* xvi. 3. and a truth hath ſuch a ſeal from experience, that ſince religion was in the world, I muſt ſay none ever tried it in vain; but the want of this hath inſtructed many to their coſt, how deceitful a thing the greateſt abundance of means oft prove. Now for confirming it, let us but compare the remarks and hiſtories of all times with the word, and I am ſure it can be hid from none, how the moſt ſad ruining ſtrokes are ſeen to be a pit of mens own digging, and moſt obſervably hath met theſe, who would chuſe a way to themſelves, and frame a policy of their own, in counteracting the word, which did at laſt undo them.

2. *Principle*, If the ſcripture be true, mens intereſt and policy here then is, *That it is better to truſt in God, than put confidence in man; yea, better to truſt in God, than put confidence in princes*, *Pſal.* cxviii. 8. which is a truth that never ſhamed the face of any to this day who adventured thereon, but oft have their returns exceeded their venture. And moſt remarkably theſe have been before the world ſet againſt one another, which we ſee, *Pſal.* lii. 7, 8. *Lo this is the man, that made God his ſtrength*, &c. *But I am as a green olive-tree, I truſt in the mercy of God for ever.* No time can make that thrive on which the Lord puts ſo dreadful a mark, as he hath done upon human confidence, *Jer.* xv. 5. But we may ſee, it was never more diſcernible to the world than at this day; with ſuch a breaking of viſible props, as calls aloud to *ceaſe from man*, and thus be inſtructed, how *men of low degree are vanity, and great men a lie*, *Pſal.* lxii. 9. ſo as to know the alone certainty of that which is, *v.* 7. *In God is my ſalvation and glory; the rock of my ſtrength and my refuge, is God.* But oh how rare a practice is it in the world, to rowl the burden of an outward intereſt ſo fully on God, as to have the heart at a true repoſe and quiet, when viſible appearances are not.

3. *Principle*, Though nothing be more croſs to the *politicks* of this age; yet it is clear, *That to court humility is the riſing hand, and the ſureſt way for preventing humbling ſtrokes*, as we ſee, *Mat.* xviii. 4. And which ſeem ſtrange, though convincingly obvious in all times, that chriſtians lying near the duſt in a low ſelf-eſteem, and being much on their knees, will keep ſuch more on their feet, than the eager graſpings of others at that ſhadow which flies the more it is followed. *Nam ſic deſcendendo, aſcendendum eſt in via chriſtiana.*

4. *Principle, That the ſureſt means to have adverſaries gained to be friends, is by having our ways directed to pleaſe God*, *Prov.* xvi. 7, and thus endeavour a commending our ſelves to the conſcience of men, but not their humours; for which ſo great an aſſurance is in the word, with that convincing ſeal from experience, and the remarks of every age, as a chriſtian can ſolidly reaſon; when I follow my duty, then is it ſure, I follow my intereſt; and in conſulting how to be accepted of God, and give him the preference to all, I keep the ſtraight line to gain both on the conſcience and reſpect of others. I know ſome will object the ſad entertainment *faithfulneſs* gets in the world; and which cannot be denied, how cloſe adherence to the way of God, hath brought many under a dark cloud; but is it not as certainly known with what advantage this hath ſtill brought them out; ſo as their preſent loſs hath brought a double gain, yea, found to meet ſuch many days after, even to the conviction of others.

5. *Principle* is this, *That it's more true policy to give to the poor, where no retribution can be looked for, than to give to the rich*, *Prov.* xx. 27. which if deſigned for God, does alſo enſure its return, and compenſation from him. I know nothing ſeems more croſs to reaſon and the rules moſt

in ſuch a time walk by; but if the Lord be God, and the ſcripture his word and teſtimony, there ſhould be no halting here; for to theſe is an expreſs bond given from heaven, and put in regiſter here upon earth, in which he who keepeth truth with men for ever, hath enſured by his *faithfulneſs*, that *what is given to the poor, is lent to the Lord*, and he *will repay it*; and I muſt ſay, none ever took this in earneſt for their ſecurity, and found it fail; but when it ſeemed to be loſt, and as caſt on the waters, it hath been repaired, with a four-fold more to them or theirs. This I am ſure many are debtors to witneſs; as alſo that no ſuch bank can be, for the large improvement of a little, and where the principal will never be loſt. But I muſt further add, in behalf of the *faithfulneſs* of God, whatever ſeem to anſwer this duty upon the matter, a wrong end and byaſs in ſeeking acceptance with others will mar all, and be as a *dead fly* in the box which corrupts the moſt precious ointment; for how can they put this debt upon the Lord, when that is their reward from man.

6. *Principle, That a publick ſpirit for God, is the beſt expedient for a man's own things, and to ſecure a private intereſt; and the want of this, the cauſe of ſaddeſt loſs oft even upon that account;* this we may ſee, *Hag.* i. 9, which if there were more of an obſerving ſpirit, could be under no miſtake, why many *ſow, and bring in ſo little*, with ſuch perſonal grief, and bitter complainings at home; ſo ſad a fruſtrating of the moſt painful endeavours, by an immediate blowing thereon from heaven; *Why ſaith the Lord of hoſts, becauſe of my houſe that is waſte, and ye run every man to his own houſe.* One ſaith, ſhall I leave my ſweetneſs? and others ſhall I leave my fatneſs, to own duty in an evil time, and when viſible hazard attends this? for which I may ſay upon the warrant of the word, many now put their moſt endeared intereſts to be as a butt of the holy jealouſy and indignation of God.

7. *Principle, It is not duty alone, but a matter of ſelf-intereſt, for a chriſtian to keep cloſe under the authority of the word, to prevent ſome ſadder yoke; and their being put under that diſcipline of the rod*, which none can miſs in ſome meaſure for their recovery, where mercy is in their lot; for thus does the ſcripture method lie, and the way to make a ſore and afflicting burthen light that it is by bearing it, and an humble ſubjecting the ſoul thereto, with which the ſenſible abatement of its weight will be found, *Heb.* xii. 7. *Jer.* xxxi. 18. It is evident, how mens rods are taken out of their own ſins, and that it is their wickedneſs is made to correct them; yea, how ſin and the rod grow up together, according to that, *Ezek.* vii. 16. where one growth may be ſeen for both, *pride buds, and the rod bloſſometh.*

8. *Principle, That doing for the Lord, and a ſerious reſpect to him in it, is the ſureſt way to prevent labouring in vain, and for enjoying long the work of their hand, Iſa.* lxv. 22, 23. from the want of which, what work and labour is loſt, with the ſore toil of many in the external duties of religion, that will never redound on their account. Oh what an amazing thing is this, were it ſeriouſly conſidered, to ſee men in ſuch earneſt about a counterfeit ſhew, and to appear that which they are not, which ſo certainly leads into a real hell, and wants not ſome beginning here upon the conſcience, yea, betrays that very end they propoſe to themſelves within time; for *the bed is ſhorter than they can ſtretch themſelves upon*; and is rare to find any get into another world, before the vail be taken off them here.

9. *Principle, That a ſerious following the work of the preſent day, is the beſt way to provide for the event of the next, and for ſuch who have but*

one

one hope, and all their dependencies on God, to have but one fear, that they go not out of the way of the promiſe; this we ſee, *Pſal.* xxxvii. 3. *Gen.* xvii. 11. and is it not found by continued experience, how making haſte for bringing mens deſign to a deſired iſſue, gains no time of a patient waiting on the Lord? but the want thereof hath put many ſome ſteps backward, when they ſeemed to make the furtheſt advance.

10. *Principle*, That *the way of the Lord is ſtrength to the upright*, *Prov.* x. 29. And is that alone which can make their feet ſtand in an *even place*, when the world is reeling; this is a truth many have tried, and to this day could never bear another witneſs, but that it gives more in to ſuch as cloſely follow it, than they could either loſe, or give out on that account; yea, that where men once find their hand to eſſay duty, though with ſoreſt wreſtlings, when the Lord's going before to clear their call is known, then hath their heart and ſtrength been remarkably found to follow.

11. *Principle, That to be intereſted in the bleſſing, is that which maketh rich*; and the moſt certain way for attaining ſuch an end beyond all the devices of mens heart which can be tried in another road. I confeſs the faith of ſuch a truth ſeems to be little in the world, and the evidences thereof too obvious to be denied; though thus it is written, and by the faithfulneſs of God enſured to ſuch who will give him credit, that it is his *bleſſing maketh rich, and adds no ſorrow therewith*, *Prov.* x. 22. But to acquit his way, and certainty of the truth therein, of which one tittle cannot fall to the ground; I offer theſe remarks, with a ſerious appeal to the judgment and diſcerning of the moſt ordinary obſervers, if they do not ſee, 1. That there is an enjoying more in a little, yea, a real poſſeſſing ſome have of more than others of the largeſt meaſure: Now it is ſure riches can only be underſtood as it reacheth the end for which by all it is ſought after, ſatisfaction to the mind; and not to have theſe things, but to enjoy them; without which, what is moſt deſirable to the ſenſe, can have no pleaſant taſte. 2. Is it not known ſuch a viſible income by the bleſſing there is, as cauſeth a real ſubſerviency of the little of ſome for the owner's uſe, and to go further than the great things of others, ſo as they are made *to abound and have no lack, whilſt theſe who have gathered much, have nothing over*, but in the fulneſs of their ſufficiency are in want. 3. It is ſure, in no time this can be hid, how ſomething is above the care of the mind, or labour of mens hand, to croſs or promote an outward intereſt, a falling in and ſurpriſal of ſome providences, which from no appearance, or the remoteſt tendency of outward cauſes, could in the leaſt be foreſeen, but comes moſt viſibly croſs to the preſent ſcheme and poſture of their affairs, that in one day is found to undo more than many years had ſet up. 4. In this I need but appeal to mens eyes, as well as to their reaſon, if the pretended riches of many who unqueſtionably have a great ſhare of outward things, be not a falſe cover under which the world may ſee what anxiety, trouble, fear, and moſt bitter complainings are, and how rare ſuch an inſtance is, to whom riches is given in their haſtening out of the way of the bleſſing, and not a large meaſure of ſorrow added; ſo as it is really no ſuch thing that moſt have, but a ſerpent inſtead of bread, where the ſting is more ſharp than the honey ſweet; it is as the husk, when the ſubſtance thereof may be oft found in the houſe of the poor more than in theirs. Oh what a miſtaken thing is this, that with ſuch eagerneſs is graſped after, if there were more of the true uſe of reaſon, when it is ſo certainly known that ſomething there is above outward cauſes to imbitter the moſt plentiful lot, and take the uſe thereof from ſome, and its comfortable uſe from others, whilſt it is no leſs clear, the true joy and ſatisfaction of many in their lot,

yea what a ſun-ſhine the bleſſing cauſeth ſuch live under, on whom the world did never ſeem to ſmile; and what does this mean? Is it not to ſhew the performance of that ſcripture, which in no time can fall to the ground, *That the bleſſing of God maketh rich, and adds no ſorrow therewith.*

12. I ſhall but add one *principle* more of that excellent wiſdom given in the ſcripture, for mens being wiſe to themſelves, by their following duty, *how it is the intereſt of ſtate, and beyond all theſe politicks, or* Arcana Imperii, *for its preſervation*, which ſeems moſt infallible to many, *to ſeek the promoting of truth and godlineſs*; for if theſe ſhould wear out, and go away, the land cannot poſſibly be ſafe where once they had an abode. I know, to mention this in ſuch an age may ſeem for no other advantage, but to expoſe theſe truths to the deriſion of ſuch who know no intereſt the Bible or its rules can have in the management of ſtate affairs, yea look on theſe who are in any meaſure ſerious to live up to the truth and principles they profeſs, as the ſoreſt grievance of the place they live in; ſo ſad a requital muſt ſuch often meet with, who I may ſay, next to the long-ſuffering of God, are the greateſt means to prevent their countries ruin; but it is ſure, this ſame reaſon ſtands good, which *Eſther* made uſe of, *Chap.* vii. 4. if *theſe periſh*, and the *truth be ſold*, though with the greateſt price of appearing advantage, and that all ſhould hold their peace, yet could it not *countervail the King's damage*, and ſo inevitable to ruin the publick intereſt of the ſtate which muſt follow thereon; for theſe are clear: 1. Whatever reacheth a ſtroke to truth and practical godlineſs amongſt men, it doth the ſame to the greateſt ſecurity of government, and that which founds the ſtrongeſt obligations to any civil and moral duties. 2. Is it not manifeſt if theſe wear out and be depreſſed in a nation, moral righteouſneſs and truth amongſt men will quickly follow, and the greateſt ſecurity for all perſonal intereſt is ſo far gone? 3. And is it not obvious to reaſon, how the ſame eſſays to depreſs truth and practical godlineſs in a place, muſt help atheiſm and a prophane ſpirit to get up, which hath ſo direct and native a tendency to weaken the politick body, and emaſculate the ſpirits of men to obſtruct the vigorous improvement of natural parts; yea, moſt remarkably does depreſs and change the very *Genius* of ſuch a people. It is true in ſuch parts where the truth of religion had not come, none will deny what ſingular advantage there hath been both of natural and moral endowments, as of old in *Greece* and amongſt the *Romans*. But from no records of times paſt could this ever be ſeen, that theſe were found with the departing of the truth from a place after its being profeſſed and owned there; for which how ſad a witneſs is a great part of the world this day, where it may be ſeen, the darkeſt night of barbariſm and immorality hath befallen theſe places in a ſpecial manner, where the light of the goſpel once ſhined, as much of *Africk*, and where theſe once famous *Aſiatick* churches were, does evidence. 4. Can there one inſtance be given, of a nation's proſpering, that oppoſed and fought a depreſſing of the truth where it had once been received; but this all may ſee, who are ſerious to obſerve, how the moſt remarkable ruining ſtrokes that have come upon a place have had ſome viſible falling off, and withſtanding of the truth to go before; for then will it not be with ſuch a people as in former times to brook that peace which had been formerly known there before the light ſhining amongſt them? but the ſcripture makes it clear, that the *red and pale horſe*, and he whoſe work is to take peace from the earth, does immediately follow a rejecting of the truth. It is known what a flood of Judgments did fall in after ſo great growth of *Arianiſm*, and that height which it came to, not only by ſeduction but perſecution. And can it be forgot what did ſo immediately precede theſe deſolating ſtrokes on

the *German* empire, which was upon ſo remarkable a violence and depreſſing of the truth in *Bohemia*, and other places there.

SECT. 5. This peculiar *improvement* might chriſtians make of the preſent ſubject, with ſuch clear diſcoveries of the continued verification of the word; to *have ſome further reach and diſcerning of things to come, and what yet is before the church's hand*, than what moſt ſatisfie themſelves with. A truth in which is to be underſtood no following after ſecret things, which in the deep counſels of God are ſhut up from men; nor is it to know times and ſeaſons, and purſue a wiſdom above that which is written, which were to invade his prerogative, to whom alone this belongs to know things contingent with their proper circumſtances, and foreſee them falling out when no poſſible tendence of ſecond cauſes can be alledged thereto; for divine revelation is the alone rule and meaſure of our knowledge, and the bounds ſet by the Lord, beyond which there muſt be no more ſearch: yet is it clear, that a concerning uſe and improvement of the ſcripture lies here, and ſome part of the chriſtians work to conſider the truth of its accompliſhment, as it looks forward to future events as well as for things paſt. We can blame our ſelves only that we live not in a more clear and comfortable view of things to come, when ſo much advantage is for this: yea, we ſee how the ſcripture ſpeaks of there as already paſt, to witneſs not only the certainty of their performance, but that ſuch a converſe we ſhould ſeek after by ſeeing them in the word, as if they were preſent in an actual exiſtence before us? therefore is it thus expreſſed, *Rev.* xviii. 2. *Babylon is fallen.* But for clearing of ſuch a duty in ſo dark an hour on the church, I ſhall lay down theſe three particulars to be conſidered. 1. What ſolid grounds there are to point out our way here, and let chriſtians ſee what length they might come by ſcripture-light, and without extraordinary revelation for a clear and comfortable diſcerning of ſome future events, which at this day are upon a certain approach. 2. This alſo muſt be taken along with the former, what reſtraining bounds the Lord hath ſet, beyond which there muſt be no further ſearch. 3. I ſhall offer a ſhort touch at ſome particulars in ſo very dark and aſtoniſhing a time as this, to witneſs how clear and refreſhing a look might be had of ſome great things to come as if they were now preſent before us, by getting up to that watch-tower of a near converſe with God in the word.

For the firſt, it is certain, no veſſel at ſea keeps more exactly by the card and compaſs, than the church-militant does by the written word which ſtands open at all times for us to conſult how her courſe lies and keeps her way, and how well the croſſeſt winds fall in with her motion.

2. Though extraordinary ways of revealing Gods mind are now ceaſed, yet are they ſtill the ſame in the ſcripture as to the ſubſtance thereof, to which as a great height a chriſtian may get up in a ſerious enquiry after the truth, ſo as not only to diſcern preſent duty but things in their approach when at a diſtance, which the word is yet to bring forth, without any thing of that *Lumen Propheticum*, which in former times was known.

3. Is it not clear, how in the ſcripture there is a perfect *Idea* and comprehenſion of all theſe viciſſitudes and changes which are to go over the church's head here, in what deſigns the Lord hath upon the after-ages of the world; ſo as thus her fate and deſtiny is brought to light? yea, is there not in the ſcripture this day a ſtanding record of the ancient judgments of the Lord, where men may ſee the copy and preſidents of his providence for after times of the church ſet in their ſight?

4. As it cannot be denied what extraordinary diſcoveries ſome in theſe laſt times have had of future things, and remarkable exigencies of the church, whoſe

eminent holineſs and ſobriety made it the more convincing to others: yet even there did the general rule of the word ſtill go along with them, and had no new things revealed but what was contained there, though carried therein by ſingular impulſe of a ſcripture-ſpirit to apply the rule to particular caſes and perſons; but this are we not to look after, nor is there cauſe when ſo much in an ordinary way may be known by an humble, ſerious inquiry after the counſels of God in his word.

5. Is it not clear how *Daniel* underſtood by books, what yet was to come of that full accompliſhment of the deſolation of *Jeruſalem*, and the years thereof, by what he found in that prophecy of *Jeremiah*, *Dan.* 9. 2. where we may ſee him there on the ſame ſcent (whatever otherways he had of an extraordinary ſpirit) for diſcerning things to come by this ſure way of ſetting the word and event together; for which though there needs a ſpecial irradiation of the mind and a *ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation*, *Epheſ.* i. 17. Yet is that ſuch as in an ordinary way ſhould be ſought by every one of the ſaints: But oh! we ſtand as it were upon the flat and low ground, and know little what a being more abſtract and ſeparate for ſuch an end is, and have a near converſe with God in that great ſtudy of his word and works in the world; and therefore is ſo little known how great a length chriſtians might reach in the way of ordinary gifts and means to know the deep things of God, and what lies hid from the eyes of the moſt, though written forth before us in the word.

6. That ſpecial care the Mediator hath for his church and people that no ſad trial and viciſſitudes are to fall out, but the word is ſuited to give warning thereof before-hand: nor is there ſuch a ſtroke whether on a nation or a man, but the cauſe thereof may be clearly found in the word if there were more ſerious converſe with it: men need not be at ſuch work as ſome are in ſearching out the fatality and periods of kingdoms and ſtates to trouble themſelves with the intricate numbers of *Plato* and predictions of *Aſtrologers*, when ſo clear a reſponſe from theſe infallible oracles may be had, and by a ſerious enquiry there, comparing the word with the continued courſe and conduct of providence in all ages of the church ſome ſolid ground to ſee that reſpect general denunciations of judgments to particular times, yea, from a national ſinning and falling off from God foreſee the certainty of national judgments.

7. Is not ſuch an unchangeable *ſeries* and order of things in the ſcripture as may cauſe a ſafe arguing from the cauſes to the effects: for though conditional threatnings be not declarative of the eternal purpoſe of God about the event, but are moral legiſlative acts; yet is it clear they expreſs an undoubted connection betwixt ſin and the puniſhment thereof, that at *what inſtant the Lord ſpeaks againſt a nation and kingdom to pluck up, root out and deſtroy*, as we ſee *Jer.* xvii. 8. if the condition be not interpoſed of repentance and turning to God, then is it infallibly ſure and obvious though outward appearances ſeem'd never ſo croſs, that ſuch a ſentence will not fall to the ground.

8. Thus alſo may we diſcern the church's riſing and cure to be ſo far begun, as evidences of a through humbling work under her ſtroke are manifeſt, when ſuch are made to *come with weeping*, and a power therewith to wreſtle, who before lookt as a people bound under ſuch bonds as they could not ſhake off: then may we know it is a *Criſis* tending to life, *Jer.* xiii. 19. and ſome previous ſtir and motion amongſt the *dry bones* before they get to their feet.

9. There is ſolid ground whence at a diſtance it may be ſeen, what manner of judgment may be feared, ſince the word does ſo particularly circumſtantiate

ſtantiate this that *a ſword ſhall be ſent from the Lord to avenge the quarrel to avenge the quarrel of his covenant*, *Lev.* xxvi. 25.

10. It is clear alſo the time and near approach of the judgment, may ſo far be ſeen from the word by a diſcernible ripeneſs and height, that a peoples ſin is come to in ſome prodigious acts of wickedneſs; and when no acceſs the word hath to reprove, when the judge oppreſſeth and *asketh for a reward, and the people love to have it ſo*, which ſhews the fields becoming very white for judgment to put in the ſickle.

11. Such as enquire ſeriouſly at the word, may find cauſe to diſcern the wearing out of an houſe and family, and of conſuming ſtrokes to come on their off-ſpring that have been remarkably given over to the ſin of uncleaneſs, for ſuch a ſentence is given forth from him againſt that ſin whoſe word never fell to the ground, *They ſhall commit whoredom, but ſhall not increaſe*, Hoſ. iv. 10.

12. I ſhall only add this, how eaſy it may be to diſcern ſome humbling ſtroke near, and undoubtedly to follow, whether on a nation or man, where ſwelling pride and inſolence goes before; for this is a ſure application of the general rule, *Prov.* xi. 2. *When pride cometh, then cometh ſhame.* And 16. That this goeth before deſtruction.

In the ſecond place, let us conſider theſe reſtricting bounds that the holy God hath ſet to his peoples enquiries, that there be no over-ſtretching the rule, or a going further than the clear light of the word goes before them, which I ſhall here particularly touch. 1. We may purſue no *wiſdom above that which is written*, nor ſo much as look into that ark of the hid things of God, which he hath ſhut up: It is ſure there is large enough room and bounds in the Bible to arreſt the moſt unſober ſpirit, and give them work there. 2. The ſoveraignty of God and an awful impreſſion of this on the ſoul muſt ſtill bound the chriſtian's furtheſt enquiry; ſince it's clear, he ſo walks by rule as his prerogative alſo takes place, which theſe marvelous ſurpriſals of grace have oft witneſſed in meeting thus a people at their greateſt diſadvantage; for who could have infer'd ſuch a conſequent from theſe premiſes. *Iſa.* lix. 17. *For the iniquity of their covetouſneſs I ſmote them, and hid my ſelf, and they went on frowardly in the way of their heart.* Now ſhould not judgment inevitably follow according to the rule? nay, ſaith the Lord, who is ſoveraign, and in his way infinitely above our thoughts, I'll anſwer all with one cure; *I have ſeen their ways, and will heal them.* 3. Whatever length is to be reached in the diſcerning future events by the word; yet here muſt all keep a due diſtance, *Acts* i. 7. that it is not ours *to know the times and ſeaſons which the Lord hath reſerved to himſelf*, as to any peremptory determining in ſuch a caſe; though it is clear alſo that with a ſafe warrant we may enquire about the ſeaſon and near approach of ſcripture-predictions, ſo far as previous ſigns thereof are by the word given for ſuch an end. 4. It is here the Lord hath ſet bounds as to the way, means, or particular circumſtantiating of events beyond what is expreſly written and made clear from ſcripture-light. The matters of God are rolled on inviſible *wheels*, whoſe motion gets oft out of our ſight, and riſeth ſo far above human reach, that men can find nothing after him ſo as to reſtrict the glorious God from one ſtep in his way to the ſame method and circumſtances in another piece of his work. Thus the ſcripture ſhews, *How darkneſs is under his feet*, and *thick clouds round about*, even when he comes to deliver his people. 5. Theſe bounds muſt all our enquiries have, that they be in order to duty, and lead to ſome practical improvement for the work of our day; for thus were the men of *Iſſachar*, wiſe *to diſcern the times*, not to anſwer their own humour, but that they might

might *know what* Israel *ought to do.* The *prudent foreseeth the evil and hides himself,* and this solid use and advantage should be look'd to in discerning what the Lord is about to do; that christians may know what to pray for or to expect; that their heart may go alongst with these ends the Lord is now bringing forth: And is not here matter of serious exercise in a day when the hearts of the godly are so low, as their spirits seem to fail, and be ready to say, *our bones are dried, our hope is past, and we are cut off, Ezek.* xxxvii. 7. to know what aspect the written word hath on a sinking church. I love no overstretching our hope, but it is strange there is not more improving the scripture for our comfort against present appearances, from such clear demonstrative evidences we have there, of things to come; and what shall be *the end of these wonders,* whereon we now look with such amazement.

These things being premised, to prevent mistakes about this subject, I shall adventure in following scripture light with some awful regard to these bounds the Lord hath set to our enquiries here, to touch this in a few words more particularly, as not unseasonable in a time when many are at work to kindle a light unto themselves, and walk in the sparks thereof; and so woful a trade of divination hath got up in the world, that men will go to *the God of Ekron,* by seeking a divinity either in the stars above, or from the powers of darkness below, as though there were no God in *Israel,* or such a thing as his written oracles to enquire at: But *if the Lord be God let us follow him;* and if the scripture be his undoubted word, I must say none need be in the dark about things to come; as to what is bringing forth for the church in the great event of these last times, when this blessed record is so near, which came down from heaven with a fulness of light unto men, for all that concerns them to know here, and now with so clear and certain a sound speaks.

1. From what point the church's motion unto this day lies, since antichrist's height and reign we know is over with the great apostacy of the church expressly foretold under the *New Testament*; for thus by keeping sight thereof, and more near converse with the word in every step, and turn of her way, it might be easy to discern though at midnight, the certainty of her course, and how exactly it keeps with the card and compass, where a full map of her journey and passage, through time is held forth; yea, how far she hath got by the most hazardous part in her whole passage; and now seems near to a falling under the favourable aspect of some most remarkable promises in her behalf; thus also is there solid ground to expect one of the greatest conjunctions that was ever known to the church, is not only to come but on some near approach, I mean of *promises* which from former ages have been sealed up, with their performance, of the prayers of the saints, that long have waited before the throne, and their full return, yea, of some very eminent providences for making these effectual.

2. This from the word, we may with clear evidence know what ever appearances seem to contradict, That *a sad hour of temptation is coming on the world,* and on these whose work hath been to trouble the church; where this clear ground is that the faithfulness of God stands good, to put a *cup of poison and trembling in the hand of her afflicters, Isa.* li. 22, 23. and cause such *to wring out the dregs of that cup the churches have drunk of, Psal.* lxxv. 8. Nor hath it ever been found that judgment begun at the house of God and stayed there, or that the nations were a sore rod in his hand upon his people, but a judgment on these quickly follow, to shew forth the righteousness of the Lord in recompencing tribulation to such for what they have done; and make way by a day of vengeance for the year of his redeemed to come.

3. This we may discern from the word, by comparing the times and present state of the church therewith, that a work of judgment seems yet to go before her further rising, and these sore pangs and throws in the birth are not past, that most immediately are found to make way for approaching mercies; the *scripture-grounds* are these. 1. The method of providence, that with every step of the church's exaltation some previous down-casting hath still keeped proportion thereto: Nor is it found through the scripture where any great thing the Lord hath done for his church, but a remarkable height of trouble hath gone before; but is here any thing strange or matter of hesitation, where the light of the word goes so clearly before; that when one of the greatest events in behalf of the church since the Messias came into the world, until his second coming in the full destruction of antichrist, is in bringing forth a time of trouble and dismal darkness beyond what former ages have known go before such a brightness. 2*d. Ground*, Is it not too manifest such evils now follow the Reformed churches, that it may be said in no time was it ever known, the Lord passing such by without some visible mark of his anger put thereon; There needs no instancing of these, where the discovery is so manifest. A 3*d. Ground* is this, that we have seen judgment begun, but no seen fruit thereof, strokes treading on the heels of others, yet do not reclaim. And is it not a scripture-inference, when a people will not be reformed, they lie near a further stroke, yea is to be feared that which comes with a cure, may be very sore ere it hath done its work. *O who shall live when God does this!* Can we be in the dark after all that is seen this day what is coming, for such clear presages are at some times of a future event, as it may be said what *Amos* shews, iii. 8. *The Lord God hath spoken, who can but propheſy?* we can discern the face of the sky; but oh how strange is it when spiritual judgments have gone the length almost of wearing out the churches, (which must yet have a recovery) that a sound of outward judgment is not more continually in our ear! Is it time to be found lying in the hatches of the ship asleep when such unusual presages are before us. I may not in the least question where the scripture is so clear, that great brightness which yet waits on the church, to which all her trouble must make way, and that the time of the killing of the witness, and their propheſying in sackcloth is now past; yet there is true cause for fear of some unusually sharp and searching trial, and that *ultima clades* on the Reformed church, is yet to come, that may cause much shaking where there is not a through establishment in the truth.

4. Whatever height the church's trouble comes at, yet have we solid ground for this, it shall not be long, nor such a lying storm as in former ages; but we know the adversaries wrath, though great, is now bounded to a short time in these latter days; and that the brightness of the light of the gospel does much ripen the harvest for judgment to put in the sickle: Yea, though sad and very dark intervals must fall in, yet is it clear, the great work and intent of providence in this time is, to put forward the church's interest, make way for its enlargement, and bring her begun and growing victory over antichrist to a more full period, as is ensured, *Rev.* x. 7. xii. 12.

5. It is no conjectural event; but such with greatest assurance we must believe, that there is a second rising the Reformed churches shall yet have in the power and spirituality of religion; where an immediate appearance of the Lord shall be no less seen, than in that first and marvelous recovery of the purity thereof, which for many ages had been over-clouded: The grounds are; 1. So remarkable an opposition as at this day is thereto in the world, over which the Mediator must prevail, and have the decision of that strife on his side. 2. If it be sure the churches shall yet recover and rise; must not the cure be where the ruin and wearing out

hath been moſt evident: And ſuch a bleſſed return of the ſun, as will bring heat and love therewith, to be more anſwerable to their light? 3. Without this the truth of many promiſes yet to be fulfilled, could not be underſtood in the event, which ſo expreſly point at ſuch flouriſhing times of the church, as ſhall have a more bright and hot ſun-ſhine of the power of the goſpel, and pouring out of the ſpirit therewith; ſo as *the name of that place ſhall be called Jehovah Shammach, the Lord is there*, Ezek. xlviii. 35.

6. Though nothing ſeem more croſs to outward appearances, yet is it ſure, as the Lord is true, whoſe word is paſſed thereon; That whoſoever have engaged their power to ſupport the *Romiſh* intereſt, and heal that deadly wound it hath got by the goſpel, ſhall loſe the day, and find their cauſe deſperate: for the iſſue of this war is determined and ſure, the party with whom theſe contend is Jeſus Chriſt, he who was ſhewed *John*, *Rev.* xix. 13. with his veſture dipped in blood, whoſe name is called the *word of God*, and hath the armies of heaven to follow him; yea, by many degrees of wrath hath his deſign already taken place; which can be under no debate, when the Lord hath begun, but that he will alſo make an end, and no retrograde ſteps are in his way, as is clearly enſured, 2 *Theſ.* ii. 10. *Rev.* xiii. 10. xvii. 14. Nor is there cauſe to be ſtaggered in the faith of the approach of *Romes* fatal period, though we ſhould live to ſee *Britain* and the churches abroad on a ſudden over-run by the rage of that beaſt; and her light eclipſed by the *romiſh* darkneſs; but to look thereon according to the ſcripture, as the *ultimus conatus* of that wounded adverſary; which would be found to have an immediate connexion with the ruin of Antichriſt, and with the reviving and following glory of the church; for *ſtrong is the Lord God who judgeth her*, *Rev.* xviii. 8.

7. This alſo on ſolid ground from the word, we are called to believe, that no new aſſault by Antichriſt and his followers can be this day againſt the church, but muſt help to put her intereſt forward, and be for the furtherance of the goſpel; ſince it is clear, that by a continued war betwixt the Lamb and Antichriſt, is every ſtep of the church's riſe advanced; which were it ſeriouſly conſidered, the moſt formidable appearances of trouble from that party, ſhould with more comfort than fear be looked on. Yea, is not here from the Lord ſome part of his peoples mercy, that they go not out in haſte, nor get a haſty delivery, ſuch as one ſtep thereof may ſtill fit and diſpoſe for another.

8. It can be no conjectural event, where the ſcripture is ſo clear, of ſome very immediate appearance of the Lord, by making bare his arm againſt this adverſary; that will be ſuch as hath not been ſeen in former deliveries of the church, ſince the day he made his power known at the *Red-ſea*; for thus in ſcripture is it held forth as a type thereof: therefore ſhall the *ſong of* Moſes *be ſung*; though not of *Moſes* only, but *of the Lamb*, as importing ſomething more glorious, and ſome greater brightneſs put on this, which is the moſt illuſtrious act of divine judgment, reſerved to the laſt times, and upon the greateſt adverſary that ever Jeſus Chriſt had upon the earth. It is true, the church's help lies now hid, and in ambuſh, *Rev.* i. 8. *I ſaw by night, and behold a man on a red horſe*; and where was this? it was *amongſt the myrtle trees that were in the bottom*, which lay not in the world's view; but then was the earth *ſitting ſtill*, and *at reſt*, as we ſee *v.* 11, whilſt the Mediator hath his forces prepared, and is ordering and acting forth inſtruments for his peoples delivery; but at laſt will make it known, that when he comes it is not too late with help.

9. That time muſt aſſuredly come, when a remarkable ſtirring up, and raiſing of ſpirits ſhall be, to build the houſe of the Lord, and be ſubſervient to his deſign of judgment againſt Antichriſt; though ſuch in which nothing of in-

inſtruments ſhall obſcure the brightneſs of his appearance, but bear a convincing witneſs thereto. It is clear, there hath been no great piece of ſervice for the church, but ſome remarkable raiſing of inſtruments hath been previous thereto, ſee *Ezra.* i. 5. *Hag.* i. 14. And for what is to come, is not the word moſt expreſs, *Rev.* xiv. 5. That ſuch under the Mediator's conduct are making ready, who are *choſen and faithful*; yea muſt take place, That ſome of the Kings of the earth, even ſuch whoſe forefathers had given their power to uphold the *Romiſh* throne, ſhall ſo effectually concur to execute that judgment written againſt that adverſary.

10. Though we are to believe, that many ſhall be reſcued by grace from that *Romiſh* darkneſs; yet is there undoubted certainty for this, for which the word gone out of the mouth of the Lord, that he will never have peace with that party and kingdom; and no poſſible treaty or reconcilement can be therewith, until the blood of the ſaints which they have ſhed be avenged; for with this adverſary hath the Mediator declared war from generation to generation; who with the great *Anathema* is accurſed to the ſecond coming of the Lord; yea is judicially ſecluded from repentance, *Rev.* xvi. 9. *And they blaſphemed him who had power over theſe plagues, and repented not.*

This alſo is clear, whatever preſent appearances now ſpeak, that aſſuredly the day haſtens, and will come, wherein the Lord ſhall roll away the reproach of his church before all the nations, and cauſe her riſing and brightneſs anſwer the furtheſt meaſure of her abaſement, and her enemies be found liars unto her, in their predictions as well as reproach; which though at this day is marvelous, how it can be effectuate; the promiſe will make way for it ſelf thro' all theſe difficulties.

Sect. 6. This peculiar *uſe* might chriſtians make of ſuch a ſubject, and that certainty by the experience of the verification of the word on their ſoul; *to be more fixed in the truth, againſt error and the ſubtil aſſaults thereof*; when from a practical acqaintance with theſe truths which others impugn, they can with the furtheſt perſwaſion of heart put their ſeal to the ſame; and have an argument from within, which all the world cannot anſwer. How many ſcoff at aſſurance of ſalvation, the inward witneſs of the ſpirit, yea at the doctrine of imputed righteouſneſs, who never knew the ſure and ſenſible effects thereof on their ſoul; but there the judicial riſe and pedegree of error may be ſeen, 2 *Theſ.* ii. 10. *Becauſe they received not the love of the truth,* &c. It is not ſtrange, to ſee what liberty ſome of this generation take, to ſport their wit and invention about the ſcripture, who know not theſe near approaches of God there, in the verification of his word; nor how clear and convincing a witneſs there is from the experience of chriſtians, in ſo much, that if moſt within the church ſhould deny the truth of a divine efficacious concurrence with the word, beyond what is objective and moral; theſe could not but put their ſeal thereto, yea how nature's light can be no reſt and meaſure of ſupernatural revelation; from what they certainly know, and have proved of the certainty of theſe truths, which are above all reaſon to comprehend, though not contrary thereto. Thus they know how little their own activity and beſtirring themſelves could do, without a ſupernatural influence; and that to will as well as to do muſt be given them, for which they are not ſufficient of themſelves. And what a ſad miſtake is it of true liberty, to have this lye in an equal indifference to good and evil; can that be any begun part of the perfect liberty which is attained by a chriſtian's further growth in ſanctification, that brings therewith a further diſtance and abhorrency of ſin; yet none will deny this is a more near approach to that ſtate of the ſaints above, where alone true and perfect liberty is. Thus from ſure experience alſo,

ſo, chriſtians can witneſs againſt theſe who deny a ſtanding miniſtry, and revile ſo divine an ordinance, (which is one of the moſt peculiar engines of the devil, he makes uſe of againſt the truth,) that they know Chriſt's ſpeaking in them, and working by them with a moſt diſcernible authority and power in the ſerious following their maſter's work; yea how by the doctrine of the church, which meets with ſo much contradiction every where; they can aſſuredly ſay they *received the ſpirit*, and knows it to be the ſpirit of holineſs which does in all correſpond with the written word.

Sect. 7. This ſpecial *improvement* may be obvious, which the preſent ſubject, were it rightly conſidered, leads neceſſarily into, to *have our ſpirits thus fixed in a more full aſſurance of the doctrine and principles of the Reformed church*, as they ſtand in oppoſition to popery; upon theſe grounds.

1. That it is ſo evident, what moſt effectually tends to clear up the truth and *divinity of the ſcripture*; does inevitably ſtrike at the root and foundation of that intereſt; ſince this cannot be in the dark, except we quit the uſe of reaſon, that the greateſt controverſie betwixt us and the *Romiſh* church, where the true ſtate of the queſtion lies, is here, if the ſcripture contained in the *Old* and *New Teſtament* be of divine authority; or whether it and the *Romiſh* Bible, which is tradition, and the infallible dictates of their church, be the rule and foundation of faith? according to which deciſion it is moſt clear, their cauſe ſtands or falls; which is in effect upon the greateſt head of atheiſm, for if the ſcripture be not the ſufficient and ſure *baſis* of the chriſtian faith, all may ſee it can have none, whatever alledged, but what is from reaſon demonſtrable to be a notorious falſhood, and the chriſtian cauſe loſt. I know this may ſeem too great a challenge, whilſt they do not profeſſedly diſown that divine record; but what a mock homage is here? And is it not thus worſe uſed, with a more inſufferable indignity put thereon, than the moſt avowed atheiſts could do; to put out its eyes, as the *Philiſtines* did *Sampſon's*, and then bring it forth to make ſport before the world, which is indeed their greateſt enemy and plague; though they are not aware, that it will undo their mirth, and at laſt pull down the houſe above them. Can the truth of this be denied? Yea, how with the higheſt contempt and deriſion they deal with the ſcripture; as ſuch who would take a ſoveraign judge, whoſe authority uſed to be venerable to all, and put a ſervanr upon the bench above him; whilſt he muſt not only ſit in a lower place, but have it declared to the world, that none regard what he ſays, ſince to them he can ſpeak no intelligible ſenſe; nor hath any deciſive power, or authority more than the meaneſt of the people, but what is from them alone: Now, is not this to declare him no judge, but a dead image ſet up for ſport, with much more indignity than to thruſt him out of door. I confeſs they have taken a ſure way to end all diſputes, nor needs any more contending about particular truths of the words, or to cite its authority; when theſe are their known and profeſſed principles. 1. That the church of *Rome* can make that ſcripture, and to be authoritatively binding on their conſcience, which was never writ in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*; ſo as they have ſuch a large ground to go upon, that nothing poſſible can put them to a ſtrait. 2. That the ſcripture it ſelf hath no deciſive voice, until theirs precede; nor any authority, but what is precarious, and dependent on them. 3. That to go in unto this bleſſed record, and ſeek the counſel of God there, is but to conſult a maſs of dead unſenſed characters; that can have no intelligible ſound, nor articulate voice, until the *Romiſh* Clergy cauſe it ſpeak, and put a ſenſe thereon: and thus is the letter of the ſcripture undeniably paſſed from and no other Bible but their ſenſe and meaning. 4. That there is no founding the chriſtian faith on any certainty of divine

truth in the ſcripture, nor on that ground, *Thus ſaith the Lord:* But, Thus do their church ſay, and the *Pope* as ſupreme head thereof. 5. That the very being of God, the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, muſt have a dependence on the church e'er they can be articles of our faith, and be believed. It is ſure, there is no acceſs to deny that theſe are *Romiſh* principles, which they muſt either own, or impeach their greateſt writers of falſhood, who ſo expreſly maintain the ſame; but if theſe hold, it may then be ſaid their work is done, and are got out of all poſſible reach of proteſtant arguments, with this one anſwer; you have no Bible, or any thing to prove your religion, but what you muſt have from us: ſo as the great work of the Reformed churches this day is to appear for the truth of chriſtianity, and that ſuch an authentick, and ſacred inſtrument of truth, certainly is, whereon it is founded.

2. This *advantage* is for being more throughly fixed in the truth againſt *Popery*, from theſe clear diſcoveries of the ſcriptures accompliſhment, and what near converſe is to be had therewith by experience; that thus it is ſure, the ſcripture can be known with the greateſt certainty of evidence to be the word of God, without all dependence on the church. Which makes void one of their greateſt fundamentals, that none can be aſſured thereof, but by the church's teſtimony. It cannot be denyed, that the whole frame and ſtructure of the *Romiſh* church; with that appearance it hath this day, is a ſingular help to confirm the truth, where all may ſee theſe propheſies that concern the Antichriſt, under the *New Teſtament* ſo viſibly fulfilled: But I hope that gives no ground for a neceſſity on us to take the truth of the ſcripture implicitely off their hand; and I am ſure there is none elſe.

3. This *advantage* there is from the preſent ſubject, for being more ſolidly fixed in the truth againſt popery; that we can thus know, and keep ſight of the Reformed church, and the whole *ſeries* of providence about her in the moſt remarkable changes ſhe hath been under; both during antichriſt's, and ſince ſhe begun her riſe: where it is ſo evident, how exactly all anſwers to the word, and that her caſe hath not been more low, afflicted, and latent, than is there held forth; and how certainly the Lord hath performed his truth, in what length hitherto his work about her hath come.

4. Is it not thus, by the clear evidence of the ſcriptures accompliſhment, and a ſerious converſe therewith, we may ſee the certainty of antichriſtianiſm in the world (which as an event of the word behoved to take place under the *New Teſtament*) how convincingly it is verified in the doctrine of the *Romiſh* church; ſuch as all who are in earneſt ſo far as to compare this with the written word may know how not only different from the truth of chriſtianity revealed there it is, but moſt viſibly deſtructive thereto; as this day hath been fully cleared before the world by the labours of ſuch, who ſince the breaking of the light, were helped of the Lord to contend againſt this adverſary.

AN EPISTLE TO THE Christian Reader.

READER,

THEY are well, and at a bleſſed advantage in ſuch trying and winowing times we are fallen in, whoſe great ſtudy is to make peace with God, and underſtand their way where it lies, and upon what ſecurity they adventure, when dark clouds are ſo remarkably caſting up, and all ſenſible grounds almoſt ſhaken, ſo as the life of faith ſeems now in another manner the chriſtian's trial, how to be at reſt and fully quiet upon the truth and faithfulneſs of God, I muſt ſay than in any former days, that we or our fathers have known, ſince the begun riſe and recovery of the church from antichriſtianiſm; and ſhould not this lie near, as the greateſt intereſt men can have to be taken up with, that their anchor is ſure, and caſt within the vail, and to know on whom they have believed, when the jealouſy of an highly provoked God is now ready to burſt forth, and great wrath ſeems to be on this generation; when a ſtrong and hot battle may be looked for to be yet before the Reformed churches, and very near; yea, ſuch times, when there may be *no peace to him that goes out and comes in:* But to theſe, theſe only, whoſe peace is above all ſuch ſtorms, as knowing the rock they found on is God, that the great things of the everlaſting goſpel are aſſuredly true, and the teſtimony of the word, whereon he hath *cauſed them to hope* to be ſuch, as can make it ſweet and eaſy to roll the whole of their intereſt thereon, not only for what doth concern them within time, but an eternity of glory to come, with ſome reſpect to this; and I may ſay, under ſome weight of this *ſubject*, is this ſma'l treatiſe offered to your ſerious peruſal, being a brief touch of theſe *great and marvelous things, which the Lord hath done for his church under the New Teſtament*; O that with a bleſſing from him therewith, it might be a *word in ſeaſon* to any, and an helper to their joy, and ſtrengthning in the truth.

It is clear, that the works of the Lord and theſe marvelous things he did in the ſight of our fathers for confirming the truth, is a weighty talent and truſt, we ſtand this day accountable for. 1. For being more ſtrengthned in his way, ſince it is there, *his name is near.* 2. To obſerve and make a *diligent ſearch* there anent, *for they are great, and ſought out of all that take pleaſure therein, Pſal.* cxi. 2. Yea, whilſt we are under ſo preſſing a call thus to come, and ſee the Lord's being God; *whoſe work is honourable and glorious, and his righte-*

ouſneſs

ouſneſs endureth for ever, v. 3. 3. To keep up the remembrance thereof, that *one generation may praiſe his works to another*, and not loſe ſight of the great wonders of former ages, and thoſe events of providence about the church, ſo famous, publick, and of ſuch unanſwerable evidence, though now many generations paſt, as even to this day might be, as if they were preſent in our ſight, and a continued wonder before us. Yea, I muſt ſay, it ſeems to be a peculiar guilt and controverſy, which the holy God hath with the preſent generation, when there is no ſuitable regarding his works, nor calling to mind his power and judgments of old, but ſo viſible a tempting of him upon every new ſtep of our trial. 4. And ſhould not this cauſe a further weight and impreſſion of ſuch a duty on us, *that we may give unto the Lord the glory of his works* and wonders done in times paſt, and for putting to our *ſeal* to that glorious adminiſtration of providence under the Mediator's hand, about his church under the goſpel, who alone was found worthy to looſe that *ſealed book*, and *hath done all things well*; that his work is perfect, and in a great part now brought forth in the event before our eyes; with ſuch marvelous things, which in their appointed time and ſeaſon, have been made known, as ſhould never have entered into mens thoughts, if they had not been foretold in the ſcripture; ſo as a greater truſt now falleth under our hand, than thoſe who lived in former ages. O how ſweet ſhould a ſerious aim at this be, for each in their ſeveral capacities to be thus concerned, how to advance the repute and credit of the truth of Chriſt; and make known to the ſons of men *his mighty acts, and the glorious majeſty of his kingdom under the* New Teſtament.

Though the church's ſtate and condition, ſince that bleſſed reſtoration after the fall hath been ſtill militant upon the earth, yet we may ſee the *croſs* with ſome further meaſure of ſharp and ſearching trials have a more peculiar reſpect to the diſpenſation of the goſpel, and remarkably ſuited thereto, to go through much *tribulation*, than it was to thoſe times under the *law*; yea, thus ſome aſtoniſhing and more continued aſſaults, than was known to the ancient church, as conſentaneous to a greater manifeſtation of grace, and higher degrees of light. But here alſo how ſweet and confirming a proſpect may we have of the way of the Lord, which this preſent eſſay does point at, I hope with ſome clearneſs. 1. That neither *Greece* nor *Rome*, whoſe conqueſts were once ſpread through moſt of the *nations*, did ever know ſuch triumphs as the truth, and doctrine of Chriſt hath had in thoſe times of greateſt ſufferings and perſecution, both over the pagan and antichriſtian world, over the thrones of kingdoms, as well as the meaneſt cottages; yea, how this hath made the earth to tremble, and the nations ſhake in their day. 2. What rare examples of holineſs, and of the marvelous power of the truth (yea, theſe not a few, but innumerable) we thus have in our ſight, who did both burn and ſhine (though with borrowed light from their bleſſed head) and with ſo bright a luſtre in the darkeſt night of the church's ſufferings, as all might ſee the *ſpirit of God and of glory did reſt upon them*; yea, thus may have a more convincing view of the glory of the church militant, if they would but come near, and conſider this ſtrange ſight, what hath been her ſtate under the goſpel, *the buſh burning and not conſumed*, and what was ſaid of *Joſeph* in the type, *how his bow did abide in ſtrength*, amidſt ſuch amazing and renewed conflicts. 3. That the recovery of chriſtianity from antichriſtian darkneſs is ſuch, as hath no leſs demonſtrative evidence of the immediate power of God, and his outſtretched arm, yea, moſt aſtoniſhing ſigns and witneſs of an extraordinary providence therewith, than the firſt ſpreading thereof amongſt the nations. And though it is not now a time of miracles in that manner, as in the days of the apoſtles, yet have theſe been times of the great wonders of the goſpel, as in many inſtances may be convincingly evident if men do not ſhut their eyes thereat.

For what paſſages are here inſerted, I may with confidence ſay, there hath been ſome ſerious enquiry made, and a being not eaſily ſatisfied anent the certainty thereof, from the graveſt both of *ancient* and *modern hiſtories*, and to have ſuch evidences of their truth as might be to the furtheſt convincing, to one who was under ſome preſſure on his own ſpirit for a clear quieting perſwaſion hereof, no leſs than to ſatisfy others. O what is it to be perſwaded of the reality of the goſpel, to know and be ſure, that when this *earthly tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved, we have a building in heaven eternal, that is not made with hands*, ſince to be a chriſtian in earneſt, and have an aim to follow the Lord fully now in ſuch remarkably dark and ſearching times; does indiſpenſibly call for ſome higher degrees of aſſurance and eſtabliſhment, than ſeems by moſt to be underſtood; It is not eaſy ſometimes for the moſt eſtabliſhed to be kept from fainting in the way to their country, ſuch may be the preſſure of affliction, and multiplied temptations, and ſo dark an hour on their ſoul, to bring in queſtion, what with greateſt aſſurance they once knew, and with humble confidence could bring in before the Lord, as his own ſeal; yea, a few days may come the church's way,

more

more remarkable for trial, than a'moſt an age before. It is ſure the furtheſt length in being confirmed in the way of the Lord, and of a ſolid eſtabliſhmement in the truh, was never more preſſingly called for; yet how rare a ſight ſeems this to be in the days we live in. Some things may ſeem ſtrange, which I have been put to think on with aſtoniſhment. 1. That the meaſure of light, and theſe confirmations of the truth given in to this generation, doth ſo far exceed the meaſure of former times; yet ſeems it to be the peculiar aſſault ſuited to this age, wherein the power of darkneſs does moſt appear, *that prodigy of Atheiſm*; yea, how far many have loſt all perſwaſion of the truth, and makes it their work to reſolve their faith in an uncertainty of any principles. 2. That judicial tendency the light and knowledge of moſt now ſeem to have, for a further deadning of their conſcience, and where its true and native fruit ſhould be to humble and abaſe, how rare this is, but to the contrary effect, to ſwell and puff up, and what an ordinary way of converſe have moſt learned with the greateſt truths of the ſcripture, as if there were no more but to make theſe a ſport of wit and invention, in their debatings there anent, which could not be poſſibly conſiſtent with an awful regard and perſwaſion of its being the word of the living God or their ſouls being under the power and authority thereof; yea, none more found beyond the reach of conviction, and the awe of light further off their conſcience, than many who have been once enlightned. 3. How men ſhould live at ſuch diſtance with theſe great things that are ſo ſhortly to come to paſs, as an *eternal ſtate, and reſurrection of the dead*, which could not but enforce ſome converſe therewith in another manner, to have them more preſent and as ſtill in our ſight, if they were truly believed. Oh! if chriſtians were ſuch a length in their being confirmed in the truth, which they are called to ſeek after, the greateſt ſtrait and trial even in times of heavineſs otherwiſe, then would be to bear their joy and comfort, which that marvelous change they ſhall ere long know and enjoy of an eternal glory could not but cauſe. 4. And can ſerious godlineſs be conceiveable in its exerciſe, without deep and ſolid impreſſions of the certainty of divine truth, when this is ſo neceſſarily conjoined with a being kept in the love of God, and under a bleſſed conſtraint thereof; thus a reſignation of their whole intereſts to him, is made ſweet and eaſy, ſo as to know they can never make ſo much of any worldly enjoyment, as by an offering up, and reſigning it to his bleſſed call. Yea, is thus made comforting to endure, and though *hope deferred may make the heart ſick*, yet are they then kept unſhaken with ſuch a quieting aſſurance of the truth, that though it pleaſeth us beſt, when the returns of prayer make haſte; yet ſince they know it gives more glory to God, when he delays moſt, to have a ſweet complacency therewith: If *Job*'s trial had been ſooner at a cloſe, it might have been more his perſonal eaſe, but not more for the Lord's honour; no mercy hath ever been more endeared, than what hath broke out of the midſt of the thickeſt cloud, or more full and ſweet, than what hath come after much patience, and continued wreſtlings.

I muſt further add, as to ſome peculiar improvement of theſe paſſages here recorded, how a ſerious reader may find theſe truths both confirming and ſweet, which convincingly are preſented before him. 1. That the moſt rare experiences of the ſaints, and their ſharpeſt trials have ſo uſually met, and theſe the ſweeteſt diſpenſations, which would have been moſt croſs to their own choice; yea, have ſeemed moſt judgment-like to ordinary obſervers. 2. That it is ſure there are diſcoveries of the truth known to the ſaints in times of ſuffering, which are unconceiveable to any at a diſtance. O how the world would wonder, if they underſtood what theſe knew, and have been then admitted to enjoy. 3. How the continuance and preſervation of the church in all the times of the goſpel is ſuch, as is peculiar to her alone, and can be ſaid of no intereſt or party elſe; which hath born out ſuch great revolutions, as have moſt changed the face of the world; and theſe almoſt univerſal deluges of *Paganiſm*, *Arianiſm* and *Antichriſtianiſm*, which like an inundation did for a time go over her head. 4. Though the diſpenſations of the Lord have a wonderful deepneſs, and but a little thereof can be reached, whilſt ſin and mortality ſtand in the way; yet we may ſee here how *patience* can make an outgate break up before a deliverance, and tribulation for the goſpel to be one of the ſaints privileges, which hath a peculiar rent and intereſt lying to it; that ſuch have griefs and comforts the world is a ſtranger to; yea, how that meaſure of trial, grief or pain did meet none of his people in his way, which the ſpirit of the Lord hath not made eaſy to endure, and to be comforted therein. 5. How ſuch hath been the caſe and preſſure oft of the ſaints under their ſufferings, as may demonſtratively witneſs, it muſt be ſome ſtrong conſolation, and no ſhadow that could thus ſupport them under the ſame, when no viſible cauſe was for it. 6. That when the Lord calls his own quickly away, there is ſome diſcernible growth then uſually previous thereto, and a

reaping of an early harveſt may be ſeen. 7. That it is not by might and power but an immediate out pouring of the ſpirit, which can in a few years bring more forward than many ages could undo; as in that bleſſed recovery of the church from popery might be convincing to all, 8. And have we not here a demonſtrative witneſs of the reality of that ſtate above, whither ſuch a bleſſed company are entred, and knows now what it is to be there, when the fore thoughts thereof, and theſe ſenſible glances they got of that land whither they were going was ſuch, as ſwallowed up theſe impreſſions, that their imbittering pain and torments could not but have left on them; O what they now enjoy, and what change is a chriſtian to undergo when death comes, as it ſhould not be ſtrange though theſe long to be gone to that unconceiveable ſweet and delightful paradiſe, which is above, who ever knew in themſelves the truth thereof ſealed by the earneſt of the ſpirit. 9. It is thus we ſee, how the Lord hath made good his word to the church, in a moſt ſtrange and wonderful way; ſo as nothing hitherto hath failed of the prophecies of the *New Teſtament*, but may be now read in the event; yea, theſe things brought forth in their appointed time and proper circumſtances, as they were expreſly foretold; when no influence of ſecond cauſes in the remoteſt tendency thereto, could poſſibly be diſcerned; ſuch as the greateſt Atheiſts may ſee, hath not come to paſs at an adventure, or in an ordinary way of providence.

I judged it duty (and hopes it may not be found unſeaſonable) to give ſome brief touch alſo at the preſent ſtate of the church of Chriſt in *Scotland*; and to bear witneſs to ſo great and weighty an intereſt on which the ſufferings of his people there are remarkably ſtated at this day; having been ſurprized to have found how little this was underſtood by many, who want not otherways a ſerious reſpect to the truth, and deſire to be concerned in the church's caſe there.

Though extraordinary and immediate revelations, muſt not now be looked after, but the Lord's fixed and eſtabliſhed way under the times of the goſpel, to communicate light and give anſwers to his people, is by theſe living oracles of the ſcripture, and that it is ſure the truth and authority of God there, is the alone formal object of his peoples faith; yet it cannot be denyed nor ſtrange, that he hath been pleaſed to reveal unto ſome of his ſervants; even in theſe late times in a more extraordinary way, things that were to come; eſpecially in a ſuffering condition, and when ſome ſpecial ſervice and neceſſity of the church did the more call for it. If an angel from heaven, much more men, ſhould bring any light or diſcovery of things contrary to the ſcripture, or offer to add any thing to that perfect rule; they were to be accurſed. But what in ſome ſingular paſſages here inſerted, as I have elſe where upon ſuch an account endeavoured to clear; we may ſee how theſe great ſervants of Chriſt were led in no other path than that of the written word, though they had ſome more extraordinary and immediate imbreathings of God's mind, as to the application thereof in particular caſes, and with reſpect to that part of the church where they lived, which alſo with greateſt caution, and much humble ſobriety they did own. Nor is it ſtrange, that ſuch confirmations from the Lord given in to ſome of his ſervants are ſo rare now, whilſt the ancient holineſs of theſe days is ſo little known, and what it is to believe and follow the Lord fully, with cloſs keeping by light, which theſe made their continued ſtudy.

I have aimed as far as the expreſſing the matter with ſome plaineſs could poſſibly admit, to prevent unneceſſary multiplying of words, or encroach on your time that way, and I hope the ſubject being ſo grave and weighty may oblige the reader to ſome ſerious entertaining thereof. It is a great thing to diſcern the work of God aright, and what a marvelous ſeal is in every age given in to the truth, to ſee how all theſe lines of providence, and moſt aſtoniſhing revolutions which have gone over the church, do ſo convincingly lead into the ſcripture, and to the chriſtian's further eſtabliſhment.

THE

THE

Fulfilling of the Scripture;

IN THE

Great Appearances of God for his Church under the *New Teſtament:*

PART III.

CHAP. I.

SECT. 1. IT is undeniable, that we muſt either ceaſe to exerciſe reaſon, or confeſs the greateſt intereſt men have to be moſt taken up with here, the greateſt event that ever was brought forth within time, is what is delivered to us in the goſpel, in that wonderful hiſtory by the four Evangeliſts of the incarnation, death, and reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt: That ſuch a time aſſuredly was, and now many ages ſince paſt, when the glorious Redeemer of the church, the ſecond perſon of the God-head, came down from heaven, and was revealed to the world in our nature, about which the *Old Teſtament* and propheſies thereof, had until then been traveling ſtill as in birth; yea, with moſt clear and undeniable evidence did anſwer that ſeaſon, which was expreſly pointed at by the ſcripture, and in that time when the ancient church was with greateſt longing and advertence looking forth for his appearance, which they knew could not be but very near.

Sect. 2. But such is this great subject of the gospel, and of that import, as nothing seems to bring it more in question, than that the christian world is not in another manner this day affected therewith, or can own a professed assent, without more serious returning on themselves in such an enquiry, if they can truly credit their own eyes herewith, yea, how christians indeed should be persuaded of its truth and certainty, and yet find it so easy to bear that joy, which this should cause within their soul, so as to awake in the morning, and lie down at night, without being in a more frequent transport of wondering, *to know what great things thus they are called to know and converse with*, when these thoughts are brought near to us. 1. What man's estate should be here upon the earth, if it were divided from the hope of the gospel; and the necessity thus of a Mediator, on whom the sin of the elect church might be by imputation transferred; since out of Jesus Christ God is not to be found, but as a consuming fire. 2. That it is sure God hath been manifested in the flesh, and the Redeemer of the church is no more to come, but hath come already. 3, To know how great that end was, to which the greatest design that ever the glorious God brought to light, in sending his own son into the world could answer, which next to his own declarative glory, was to restore this rare work and frame of man, by a new creation to condemn sin, that he might save sinners to repair those ruins and breaches sin had made, for which angels, nor men could never have known a cure. 4. That thus our nature should be so highly advanced and exhalted, as in the incarnation of Christ, to be assumed into that near conjunction and union with the divine nature. 5. That it was not acquittance and absolution only, from eternal wrath that is brought to light and ensured by the gospel; but such a real change also, as hath therewith a being made meet by a new and spiritual nature form'd within, for that blessed state which is above. 6. That it is so very short and uncertain a time, until these eyes of ours be shut on this lower world, and all things that are here, and when this earth must cease for ever to be the place of our abode, and we to return to it no more. 7. For such to know and bring near their thoughts, over whom many sad days and hours have gone; that no less than an heaven and an eternal glory is set before them; yea, such a marvelous and unspeakably astonishing change shall once be in their state, from what they now are, so as to be equal to the angels of God, to shine forth as the sun in their father's kingdom; when they shall draw in no other air, than the breathings of that higher paradise, and there in that blessed land be everlastingly ravished with the fulness of joy, and those pleasures for evermore which are in his presence: yea, that thus the most poor and despicable amongst men, hath a prize set in his view to contend for, unconceiveably greater than all the crowns and kingdoms of the earth. What thoughts are these that could not but follow on the believed truth and certainty of the gospel, and who would not thus endure and watch, who know such a change shall quickly be, of being entered into that state of glory? I suppose that such a proposal as this were made to any, to endure the sorest outward pain, or lie in a dark prison in an afflicted and destitute state, to conflict with much outward tribulation, for some twenty or thirty or forty years, and after to have ensured his being made king over the most flourishing kingdom, which is this day in the earth, and enjoy the same for many ages without the least change; who would debate such a choice? Yet here is no possible shadow or resemblance to that blessed hope, which the meanest christian hath set before him. 8. Such also is the import of the truth of the gospel, as not only ensures that state of glory above, but an eternity therewith. Lastly, that it

was

was infinite love and diſtinguiſhing grace hath cauſed ſuch a difference betwixt thoſe, who ſhall once dwell there, and that innumerable multitude adjudged to everlaſting torment.

Sect. 3. Though ſuch is the concernment of the goſpel of Chriſt, as is no leſs than our being bleſſed here and for ever, yet we cannot but ſee it is no greater than that *ſecurity and fulneſs of evidence,* wherewith this day it is conveyed and made known, when it is ſo clear. 1. That this could never have poſſibly entered into the thoughts of men, or been deviſed, but paſſeth all natural underſtanding, to know or comprehend in the leaſt, if it had not been revealed to us in the ſcripture, nor could human knowledge have ever foreſeen upon any principles of reaſon its taking place. 2. Was a truth, which then took mens minds moſt up, as being the greateſt tranſaction which ever was in the earth, yea, thus not only to look on at a diſtance, as moſt do on the ſtrange emergents of the time, but that which lay near, as their own perſonal intereſt, wherein their ſtate and being for all eternity, they knew was concerned. 3. A truth which is by length of time ſtill more confirmed, with a viſible atteſtation of its power and marvelous effects; now through theſe ſixteen centuries conveyed to us; as the greateſt atheiſts know not, though at this diſtance of time, how to contradict the certainty thereof, but by ſhutting their eyes; yea, viſibly enforced oft to bewray ſome tremblings of heart within, to dare a diſowning of that, which yet is their greateſt torment. 4. A truth, which in all ages required no reception in the world, but on mens exacteſt ſearch and trial there anent, with a publick appeal, not to their light and judgment only, but experience. 5. A truth, whoſe known adverſaries are ſuch alone, as never knew it upon trial; and thoſe in all ages moſt firm witneſſes thereto, whoſe acquaintance hath been on the neareſt approach, and hath had moſt familiar converſe there with, yea ſuch who with greateſt joy have ſealed the truth of the goſpel with their blood, becauſe they knew it aſſuredly to be true; which is a weighty and ſtrengthning remark, how the moſt experienced chriſtians, who have the neareſt fellowſhip with the goſpel are thoſe, and thoſe alone, who have the greateſt aſſurances thereof. 6. A truth whoſe record is not more clear and legible in the teſtimony of both *Old* and *New Teſtament* than it is upon the heart and lives of innumerable witneſſes thereto, ſince the firſt times of the goſpel, upon whom it hath been turned into a practical hiſtory, in the truth and vitals of a new life, and in their being viſibly changed into the very ſame image. 7. A truth about which all divided parties of the chriſtian world, who were otherwiſe at greateſt diſtance among themſelves, have been enforced to be one in their conſent here; yea, the *Jewiſh* as well as the *Chriſtian* writers, to bear the ſame witneſs, for matter of fact. 8. Such a truth, as could but once take place, and no poſſibility for its being re-acted ever again, to which its expreſs time and bounds were ſet by the promiſe of God for many ages before the event, 1 *Pet.* i. 10, 11, 12. *Of which ſalvation the prophets have enquired and ſearched diligently, who propheſied of the grace that ſhould come unto you, ſearching what, or what manner of time the ſpirit of Chriſt, which was in them did ſignifie, when it teſtified aforehand the ſufferings of Chriſt and the glory, which ſhould follow, unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themſelves, but unto us they did miniſter the things which are now reported unto you.* Which then could not be in the dark to the *Jewiſh* church, that his bleſſed coming was at hand, when ſuch clear grounds were given for a right computation and underſtanding thereof, both from *Jacob*'s prophecy of the ſcepters departure from *Judah*, from *Daniel*'s weeks, with thoſe great revolutions of the monarchies, which had then ſo

evident an accompliſhment in the event, and as high-way marks were for this end ſet forth in that prophecy; and whilſt they knew certainly the extent of thoſe weeks, could only be weeks of years, that ſurely the laſt period thereof was then drawing near about that very time of Chriſts appearance. 9. A truth not wrapt up in ſome general account, but ſuch as both in the prophecies and event, is delivered with moſt clear and expreſs circumſtances, ſo equal and congruous to themſelves in the whole relation hereof, as nothing can be more convincing. 10. Such is this greateſt truth of the goſpel, where all may ſee one aim and ſcope in the whole of that hiſtory, without intermixing any thing that hath not ſome evident congruity thereto, yea, tho different pen-men, and thoſe at ſo great a diſtance of time, yet here are both the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, ſo cloſely connected and met in one bleſſed point and center, that to divide theſe from Jeſus Chriſt, the whole work and frame thereof, ſhould be diſſolved. 11. A truth which none of the *Gentiles* could receive and own, but by quitting that religion they were bred and educated in, and of ſo long a time tranſmitted from their fathers; which was ſuch a religion, as put no reſtraint upon following the luſts and pleaſures of the fleſh; yea, thus to abandon the ſame, where no private intereſt or advantage, no viſible incitement from any other airt, beſides the power and certainty of the truth it ſelf on their ſoul, could poſſibly be known to influence ſuch a change. 12. A truth, which with no human confidence or aſſiſtance, did then confront the world in its greateſt ſtrength, without the leaſt flattering of any, nor did ever loſe ground by the greateſt oppoſition. 13. Which was no tranſient glance to the world, not for ſome days or months only, but a continued time of ſeveral years, did our bleſſed *Redeemer* viſibly converſe here upon the earth, yea, to confirm our faith the more in his being truly man, did go through all thoſe degrees of childhood, and infancy; and in that ſame ordinary way grow up to the full ſtature of a man, to ſhew his being *made like unto us in all things, excepting ſin*, and that he did truly *partake of fleſh and blood with his children*. 14. To confirm the certainty of this bleſſed truth, is it not alſo undeniable, that the *jewiſh and pagan* adverſaries, did not for ſo many ages conflict and wreſtle with their own ſhadow, in oppoſing the chriſtian faith, but what to their torment they found to be in greateſt earneſt; nor was it a Comedy or perſonated ſuffering, which the firſt publiſhers of the goſpel did undergo, but what was aſſuredly real, yea, that pain and hardſhip they endured in their confeſſing of Jeſus Chriſt, and owning his truth, was no dream or illuſion, either to themſelves or the world; and what could have been to make the ſhadow and appearance of being chriſtians at ſuch a rate deſirable; no human underſtanding can reach. 15. And is it not clear, that chriſtianity is the very ornament and perfection of our nature, and in ſome begun degrees even here, doth reſtore us to that right and dominion over the fleſh, which was once loſt, to a transforming from the condition of beaſts, unto that of men; yea, as love to the world doth viſibly aſſimilate the ſpirits of men unto the ſame image, ſo as they more near approach to the fleſh, the further they ſeparate from God, and as the ſoul is defiled and turns earthly, in the ſame meaſure is it darkned and alienate from the life of God; there is nothing more clear alſo than this, how this love of Chriſt which hath its alone riſe from him, doth by a bleſſed conſtraint, carry the ſoul with its furtheſt conſent to him again, to imboſom it ſelf there, until it be wholly unite with its own element, and this with as native a tendency as the ſparks fly upward. 16. Can it be in an other manner the *Jews* could expect their *Meſſias*, than in that way our bleſſed Redeemer came, except they bring ſome other authority than the *Old Teſtament* for it; and

terminate their desires herein, for having one to fill their belly, and please the flesh; or can these own either scripture or reason, and not see how far all earthly grandeur is below that inward beauty of the soul, and lively illumination thereof, with the knowledge of God, the hope of that glory which is to come, and begun victory over the flesh and lusts thereof; except they own a preference of the body to the soul, and the pleasures of the beasts, to those of angels. 17. Such is this truth, as could not possibly, without making void the faithfulness of God, have taken place in another time, or in the succeeding ages, when once the destruction of *Jerusalem*, the ceasing of the daily sacrifice, with the scattering of the *Jewish* nation, was accomplished. I shall but here further add, that such is the truth of the Gospel, as nothing could have been more cross to human reason, more obstructive of its success, or have caused a greater stumbling to the dark world, than the delivery and publishing thereof, with those circumstances recorded in the history of the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ, with that ignominy which attended the same, his low estate, and being rejected of his own people; if there had been possible access for consulting with flesh and blood, or to walk by rules of human wisdom herein, yea, any ground else to lean on, than the certainty of its own truth, and that assuredly thus should be the power and wisdom of God, to such as were ordained to life. O blessed, blessed truth, on which so great an interest leans, and so rare a structure and workmanship hath been founded, as the christian church even to this day; here is enough to answer all, when human comforts do most fail, and to countervail the griefs and sorrows of a sad time.

Sect. 4. We see that time of the coming of the *Messias*, at such a signal period and crisis in the condition of the then world, as should be gravely observed. 1. Under *Augustus*'s reign when the temple of *Janus* was shut, because of an universal peace, that thus with more serious advertance the world might regard so great a thing, as could not but be astonishing with those circumstances that follow thereon, to most of the nations about, which then were not prejudged with the noise of tumults of war, from being reached with this great discovery. 2. At such a time did this blessed healer come, and made first offer of himself to the *Jewish* nation, when its condition was in that measure deplorable, as it seemed to be almost past cure, and it is clear from the ancient *Rabbies* and their own *Talmud*, how such a reckoning they did then make, for a most sad and dark time when the *Messias* should first appear. 3. Such also was that blessed time of his being revealed to the *Gentiles*, when nothing could have been more repugnant to such times, than the doctrine of Christ and the cross, without the convey of an extraordinary divine power; when after so great universal peace, the *Roman Empire* with the nations about were most remarkably drowned in all luxury and voluptuousness, beyond the rate of former ages. 4. It was then the Redeemer came, and brought life and immortality to light unto the dark nations, *when the world through wisdom knew not God, but was* still as at dark midnight in the knowledge of divine things; yea, after the wisdom and learning of those ages past had been to the furthest improvement in their enquiry after truth, when the *Grecians* had conveyed what they could from the *Egyptians*, and the *Romans* from them, yet did still lose themselves more in groping to seek the right door, by the dim light of nature, nor knew how they came into that estate, in which they found themselves; so as all may see, 1. The utter insufficiency of natural abilities, now since the fall, to give light about divine truths, to know either what God is, or how he is to be worshipped, or the true cure and relief of such visible corruption of nature. 2. What a divinity

a divinity men would frame to themſelves, without ſupernatural revelation, whilſt nothing was more abſurd, and to aſtoniſhment irrational, than that religion which was then owned in the *Roman Empire.* 3. That it is the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt only revealed in the goſpel, and his immediate concurrence therewith, could accompliſh that change on the world, and the ſpirits of men, which no moral philoſophy could ever do, to have ſuch an irreſiſtible prevalence over nature, cuſtom, education, and whatever intereſt had formerly command over their natural diſpoſition, which nothing but a divine power could bring about.

SECT. 5. We may ſee the world was in theſe times no ſtranger to the fame and report of Jeſus Chriſt, and how publickly conſpicuous his appearance then, as nothing could be more known for matter of fact, was in no hid corner but notour, famous and undeniably manifeſt, at *Jeruſalem*, before the *Romans*, at the paſſover, when ſuch a confluence of ſtrangers from other places were preſent at the ſufferings of our Lord; yea, which in ſo ſhort a time after, put the world in ſuch a flame, and for all hath befallen that people of the *Jews*, did they never to this day once offer to deny or diſown what their fathers did herein: ſome few paſſages I ſhall inſert as a witneſs hereto. 1. What *Joſephus* hath *lib.* xviii. *cap.* 45. *in the ſame time there was a wiſe man* (if we may call him a man) *who was a worker of miracles, and teacher of them that would willingly receive the truth, had many both* Jews *and* Gentiles *his followers, and was believed to be the Chriſt: and when* Pilate *had crucified him, through the envy of our rulers, yet thoſe that firſt loved him were conſtant in their affection, for he appeared to them alive the third day, as the prophets foretold both this and many wonderful things of him, from whom are the chriſtians ſo called to this very day.* Thus *Jerome* in his book of *Eccleſiaſtick* writers ſets down which reading of his (*he was believed to be the Chriſt*) is judged preferable to that of *Euſebius*(*hic fuit Chriſtus*) or as it is in our ordinary tranſlations of *Joſephus:* ſince as *Uſher* in his annals ſhews, *what length ſoever* Joſephus *came, yet was he not directly a profeſſed chriſtian.* The *Jews* have in after-times eſſay'd to raze this whole teſtimony out of their books, as *Baronius*, and other writters ſhews, but with that diſadvantage, that for ſo many ages before, this was publick and famouſly extant, which their anceſtors could not offer to contradict. 2. We have that honourable teſtimony *Joſephus* alſo gives to *John Baptiſt*, *lib.* xviii. *cap.* 7. whoſe words are, *Herod the* Tetrarch *killed* John *ſirnamed the* Baptiſt, *a moſt excellent man, who ſtirred the* Jews *to the exerciſe of virtue; eſpecially to the waſhing of baptiſm, which he ſaid would be then acceptable to God, but in having their minds firſt purged through righteouſneſs, they added cleaneſs of body thereto, and from the great reſort was to him,* Herod *fearing his authority might raiſe ſome rebellion, thought it ſafe to take him out of the way.* 3. That of *Corn. Tacit.* a moſt known adverſary to chriſtians, whoſe words are theſe, *annals* 15. ſpeaking of the chriſtians, *Chriſtianos appellavit author ejus nominis Chriſtus, qui* Tiberio *imperitante per procuratorem* Pontium Pilatum *ſupplicio affectus fuit.* Thus expreſly witneſſing the ſufferings of the Lord to have been under *Tiberius*'s reign, and at that very time whilſt *Pontius Pilate* did rule in *Judeas*; a relation that all may ſee, could be from no reſpects in the leaſt to that way, but to hold forth only the truth in matter of fact ſo famous and known in that time he wrote, which was almoſt in the very ſame age with the apoſtles. 4. Thus *Macrobius* alſo relates, *Saturn. lib.* ii. *cap.* 4. when *Auguſtus* heard how *Herod*, among the children he cauſed kill of the *Jews* within two years old, that a ſon of his own was killed alſo, ſaid, *It was better to be* Herod's

hog

hog than his ſon. 5. Both *Ruffinus* and *Euſebius* do appeal the heathen to their own annals, that in *Pilate's* time when Chriſt ſuffered, the ſun did ſuddenly withdraw, and darkneſs enſued, which was then extant in the *Roman* records in their time, *Euſeb. lib.* ix. *cap.* 6. and *Tertullian Apol. ad Gentes cap.* 21. ſhews how then the day was withdrawn, whilſt the ſun was at the height, which thoſe who knew not that it concerned Chriſt, judged to to be only an eclipſe, yet ſayeth he, *ye find this recorded in your own monuments;* yea *Thallas* an heathen writer, and *Fleg. Tral. lib.* xiii. *Chron.* a heathen alſo, are both cited on the ſame account, the one by *Julius Africanus in the* 3. of his *Chronology;* the other by *Origen* againſt *Celſus pag.* 83. as *Uſher* in his *Annals* ſhews.

SECT. 6. It was with the firſt dawnings of the chriſtian church, that ſtupendious and great ſeal was then put to the truth by the gift of tongues and different languages; which beſides that infallible authority of the ſcripture, is with ſuch undeniable evidence to this day demonſtrable on grounds of reaſon, as can leave no poſſible acceſs to debate the ſame, where it is clear. 1. That then was the time come for all nations to know the goſpel, and when that wall of partition was to be taken down. 2. That the commiſſion and authority given to the apoſtles and evangeliſts of Chriſt for their work and miniſtry was of no leſs extent, than to the whole world, with an expreſs promiſe of this marvelous gift, as is clear both from the laſt of *Matthew* and *Mark.* 3. That the delivery over of the doctrine of the goſpel to the nations, had then an undoubted neceſſity hereof, not as a confirming ſign and miracle only to atteſt the truth of the goſpel, but as an inſtrumental mids, for making the deſign thereof effectual, whilſt theſe different languages put ſo evident a let to their work, or any ſucceſsful purſuance of it, without ſuch an extraordinary mean. 4. It is ſure, that in no ordinary way, without ſuch a miracle, could ever the chriſtian faith have in that manner ſpread, and come to the moſt dark places of the earth, by thoſe inſtruments, who were choſen, and made uſe of for the ſame; ſuch as ſome poor fiſhermen and publicans, who were known to be rude and unlettered, even to the conviction of the *Jews;* yea when it is evident, their furtheſt reach could only have been, to know their vulgar language, which then was the *Syriack.* 5. Should not thoſe undoubted and marvelous effects, which followed thereon infer the conviction of ſo extraordinary a mean, when in leſs than forty years, after the firſt publiſhing of the goſpel, ſuch famous churches were planted in the moſt dark and remote parts of the world, as all ancient records witneſs: ſo that we cannot more wonder to read ſuch a ſtupendious thing, as the gift of languages was at that time, than we ſhould know, how poſſibly without this ſuch an early and univerſal ſpreading of the chriſtian church could have been through the world. 6. Is it not clear, how this great miracle is of another manner, than others then wrought to confirm the truth, that it was not in ſome one place witneſſed, where thoſe only preſent could have acceſs, but was notour and publick in thoſe churches, where the chriſtian faith was firſt planted by the apoſtles, ſo as the very being of the chriſtian church could not be more obvious, than the truth of this in thoſe times. 7. If ſuch a matter of fact could have been poſſibly gain-ſaid, would the *Jews* then have been wanting, who ſo much ſought to ſtrengthen their prejudice againſt the goſpel, to appear in open contradiction thereto, when the account given hereof was made publick and known to all. 8. It is thus evident, how the ſcripture of the *New Teſtament* not upon the matter only, but the very language wherein moſt of the penmen thereof wrote, was in an extraordinary way given them from heaven: nor can it be judged, that to ſuch as *Peter, James* and *John,* whowere fiſher-

men, and *Matthew*, who was of the meaneſt of the people, the *Greek* language could have been ſo familiar, which was not their own vulgar tongue, as to write therein. 9. Thus alſo may be ſeen, that which was a ſtroke and judgment once, in the firſt dividing and confuſion of tongues, made ſo remarkable a bleſſing for the ſpreading of the goſpel, the one ſuited to that time of the church's incloſure from the reſt of the earth, and as an interdiction ſerved upon the nations about, the other for its furtheſt extent and ſpreading, and ſo as the one did ſhut the door, the other did no leſs wonderfully ſet it open.

SECT. 7. Though ſuch extraordinary ſigns were then undeniable, both for confirming and ſpreading of the goſpel, yet is it manifeſt, that the greateſt mean for making this effectual, and building of the chriſtian church, wherein her bleſſed head chooſed to have his appearance moſt remarkable, and convincing in thoſe times, was *By the effuſion of the* Holy Ghoſt, and concurrence thereof with his word on the hearts of men, a truth I muſt ſay, ſhould be in another manner thought of, if we knew the weight and import of this, that ſo great an atteſtation to the goſpel, and the certainty of it, as nothing can be greater, is by thoſe aſſurances to be known, and no leſs demonſtrable, than we can be ſure of the form and being of chriſtianity. Though I have elſewhere touched this ſubject, I muſt here add ſome things further, to clear that peculiar reſpect this hath, in a greater manifeſtation thereof to the times of the *New Teſtament*, beyond any former ages of the church, as that greateſt gift expreſly promiſed and reſerved to the ſame, and how ſure and viſible it hath been in the event; when we may ſee, that until then, the work of the ſpirit was more known, as a private ſeal on the hearts of the godly, than by any ſuch publick witneſs, as a confirmatory ſeal of the doctrine of the church, and commiſſion of the publiſhers thereof before others; and until then was that evidence and demonſtration of the ſpirit in no ſuch manner known, with an enforcing conviction on the conſcience of thoſe, who were otherwiſe ſtrangers to its work on their own ſouls, as hath been undeniable under the goſpel; yea that the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, for which there is no atonement, is only thus mentioned under the *New Teſtament*, and with reſpect to thoſe times of ſo viſible a manifeſtation of the ſpirit let forth, for diſcerning of ſpiritual things, and opening up the myſteries of the goſpel, for ſearching out the deep things of God, nor were thoſe myſteries formerly ſealed up, in ſuch a manner unvailed until the times of the goſpel. 3. It was moſt clear with thoſe remarkable ſufferings of the chriſtian church, which ſo early then broke up, and for the moſt of after times continued till this day; how convincing the ſending down of the Comforter was, to bear out the credit of his people, and make good their encouragement under thoſe greateſt trials, and that thus thoſe living ſprings of the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, did in thoſe times no leſs remarkably break up; yea, in ſome ſuitable meaſure, to the drying up of thoſe lower conſolations, which were formerly let forth, when the promiſes lay more in externals. 4. If we own this viſible creation to be the immediate work of God, above the poſſibility of ſecond cauſes, it is then ſure, the ſpirit of the Lords moving thereon for its firſt bringing forth, is not more demonſtrable, than that effectual operation and moving of the ſame ſpirit with the doctrine of Chriſt, for a bringing forth of the chriſtian world, which is no leſs wonderful and ſtupendious in its frame, than the other, and the concurrence of inſtruments in that time, as to what they were in themſelves, ſo ſuitable for ſuch an end; as all may ſee, it was the ſame word that ſaid in the beginning, *let there be an heaven, and an earth*, which then with no leſs evidence ſaid, let there be a new chriſtian world, and flouriſhing churches brought forth out of the moſt rude, dark and ſavage parts of the earth. 5. It is now under the

New

New Teſtament, that the ſpirit given by our bleſſed Redeemer, to ſupply his room with his church here until he come again, is made eminently forth, *in ſealing us to the day of redemption*, *Epheſ.* i. 13. And imparting the firſt fruits, and earneſt even here, of that glorious inheritance above, yea in a more diſcernible acting and writing forth in a practical hiſtory, thoſe truths of the breathings, movings, teachings, quickenings, and comfortings of the Holy Ghoſt, as the real work and tranſcript of the ſpirit on the hearts of the ſaints, cauſing them to know the kingdom of God within. 6. It is now alſo that the ſpirituality of religion, and neceſſity thereof in the worſhiping of God, is in a further meaſure opened up and made known, which in former times, whilſt the goſpel was exhibited under ſhadows, was then more in the letter, in external ordinances and duties, than in the ſpirit and inward conformity thereto, which is ſo ſweet and eaſie a way the Lord hath put his people upon to ſerve him. I ſhall but add this one thing more, how under the times of the goſpel, that marvelous indwelling of the Holy Ghoſt, is more eminently known to the church, not by ſome tranſient motions of light and love: but that familiar abode and reſidence enſured thus by an irrevocable donation to the chriſtian church, *John* xiv. 16. *for he dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you, and abide for ever.*

Sect. 8. It was then with the firſt dawning of the goſpel, and ingathering of the nations to the church, that ſo conſpicuous an atteſtation of that truth did immediately follow thereon, *Jo.* xii. 32. that in *Chriſt's being lifted up from the earth, he ſhould draw all men after him*; when a ſtandard was thus lift up to the dark and *Pagan* world, not to invite them only, but by an inviſible efficacious power to determine their conſent and incoming unto him. This was indeed a moſt ſtrange aſtoniſhing prophecy, and now is one of the greateſt ſeals, that ever was appended to the chriſtian faith, than which nothing could be more clear in the event, that he who hath ſpoken, hath alſo done this, and is no illuſion or impoſture. 1. That no ſuch change was ever known upon the world, until that bleſſed time came of the Redeemers being lift up on the croſs, *and then did he rent the heavens and come down, to cauſe the mountains flow down at his preſence.* 2. That this power which thus drew the world after it, *did not ſtrive or cry, nor was its voice heard in the ſtreet, yet ſuch a voice as enforced* the uttermoſt parts of the earth to ſubject thereto, with greateſt deſire and conſent. 3. That the *needl's pointing* to the *Pole*, which is certainly one of the greateſt myſteries of nature, can be no more ſure, than that ſuch who were as uncapable to move or ſtir, as the cold *Iron*, did then by a touch of this *hyper-magnetick* power, natively move toward Jeſus Chriſt, yea whom having not ſeen to love, by ſuch a pull at their heart, as could not fail to bring the grip therewith. 4. That no rank or ſtate of men from the greateſt monarchs to the meaneſt, no different ſize of man's life, from infancy unto old age, hath been ſince Jeſus Chriſt was lifted upon the croſs, on whom this bleſſed drawing power hath not been conſpicuouſly verified. 5. How innumerable are they, who were thus drawn, and made to move againſt their native byaſs, ſo as with their deliberate choice, to quit their right eye and hand for the truth; to let the world ſee, and oft hath this ſight been its amazement, how a touch of this power at the heart is ſuch, as in one moment can prevail more, than all the incitements of the earth can withſtand. 6. How oft this power hath been moſt diſcernible, when leaſt of ordinary means was for ſuch an end, whilſt no teacher but the inward teaching of the ſpirit though by the word, yea on ſuch, where the greateſt diſadvantage, both from education and their natural diſpoſition might be evident; what rude, ſavage, unſenſible and ſtupid perſons imbittered in

their

their enmity to the gospel, hath our blessed Redeemer thus drawn into himself by one touch of his hand at their heart.

Sect. 9. It was the immediate appearance of God's judgment, which no distance of time can darken; in that desolating stroke on the *Jewish* nation and *Jerusalem*, within a few years after the suffering of Christ by the *Romans* under *Titus Vespasian*; a stroke both in the manner and continuance, such as no instance present or past could ever be found to resemble, and when seriously considered, one of the greatest appearances of God against a people hath been, since man was formed in the earth; where these concurring circumstances, for giving light thereto, call for our serious observing. 1. That in so short a time after the death of our blessed Lord, not above forty years, this should take place, and that blood fall on them in that very generation, with their hands as it were hot and reeking in the same, which they had wished on them and their children. 2. By the *Romans*, whose interest in their opposition to Christ, they pretended most to own. 3. By such an instrument also, as *Titus Vespasian*, of so singularly sweet a natural disposition, so mild, and compassionate, as he was called *deliciæ humani generis*; yea one, who to the furthest sought a preventing of their ruin, that all might see it was the finger of God. 4. Their being visibly enforced to be executioners of their own judgment, so as the adversaries without did not so effectually concur to accomplish this, as they did amongst themselves, to shew its being something fatal beyond all possibility to save. 5. That the time thereof should be at the passover, not only thus for a greater ruin, by the ingathering of such multitudes from the whole land into the city, but also by this remarkable circumstance, to point as with the finger at the cause of so stupendious a judgment, and thus tryst at that very time of the sufferings of the Lord there. 6. That no repentance or serious enquiry after the true cause did follow, but more desperate induration, a being broken without contrition, or humbling. 7. That strange contrariety and malice then, and to this day against the christians, more than any other party, yea than against the *Romans*, who had been the instruments of their ruin; even whilst they knew the christian church sought no other decisive judge than these sacred records of the *Old Testament* betwixt them. 8. A stroke not on the nation, their families, and persons only, but on the temple, to the ceasing of the daily sacrifice, and that *Levitical* service, they so much trusted in, with such a concurrence of providences therein, as might thus shew the institution of that service was then ceased. It is observable that after the coming of Christ, and that one blessed sacrifice in his death was offered up, that the custom of sacrificing, not only amongst the *Jews*, but what had been this way amongst the heathen also, did then cease every where through the world. 9. So convincing was a divine hand in this stroke, as *Titus*, though a heathen, could answer his friends in their desire to have him crowned, that he was not the author of that work, but had only given his hands to serve the judgment of God herein, as even by heathen writers is witnessed; and those known meddals, which have to following ages been still reserved, have that impress thereon, of *Vespasian*, and a woman sitting sorrowful, under a *Palm-tree* with these words Judæa Capta, S. C. 10. We may see also their scattering, so far extended through the world, that there might be as conspicuous a monument of judgment set up, and made discernible to all, as the furthest extent of christianity. It is indeed strange men do not more seriously turn aside to consider those two great sights, now under the gospel, the one of the scattered *Jews*, so amazing a beacon set up for all ages to look on; the other of the *Romish* church, so as to enquire what these mean, whilst both give

ſuch clear light to the truth and accompliſhment of the word, as may ſilence the greateſt *Atheiſt*.

SECT. 10. It was with thoſe firſt times of the goſpel, that the fall and ceaſing of the whole heatheniſh oracles was ſo remarkable and confirming a ſeal thereto, as all times might ſee, before what power it was they fell, and could no longer ſtand, theſe concurring circumſtances being clear. 1. That for ſo many ages the Devil thus had a throne and ſubjection from the world, and was one of the greateſt engines he ever followed, for keeping it in awe by ſuch a counterfeit, ſet up againſt the living oracles of God in his word. 2. That this time and ſeaſon of their fall, and being ſtruck dumb for ever, was ſo evident whilſt the Devil was put to the hotteſt war, for keeping up his intereſt, and ſo cloſe a ſiege laid to his kingdom by the goſpel, ſo as on the furtheſt conteſt and ſtrugglings he could then make, his ſcepter was wreſted out of his hand, and broken in the open field. 3. We ſee, this marvelous event moſt clearly anſwer to what was foretold in the ſcripture thereof, and as that which ſhould follow on the promiſed time of the goſpel, *Zach.* xiii. 2. *Joh.* xii. 31. 4. It is known in what a ſtrange amaze this put the world then, and into perplexed enquiries, what it could mean that their Gods whom for ſo many ages, the nations adored and ſought to in all doubtful caſes, ſhould thus at once be ſtruck dumb, about which *Lucan* heavily complains, and *Juvenal Satyr.* iii. that the Gods by whom the *Empire* ſtood, had thus abandoned their temples and ſacrifice, and left them alone. *Strabo* confeſſeth the prieſts of *Delphos* were brought to beggery by it, yea, *Plutatch* hath a book expreſly thereupon, *De conticentia oraculorum*, and could no further reach it, but that it ſeemed they were mortal, and that preſaging virtue the earth had, where the ſeat of thoſe oracles was, had been ſpent and exhauſted.

SECT. 11. It may be convincing alſo, that teſtimony which the Devil was then forced to give, and confeſs by what power thoſe oracles were reſtrained; as that known anſwer to *Auguſtus Legat* about his ſucceſſor, cited by *Suidas* out of *Æmilius Portus*, and other moſt ancient writers. *Me, puer hebræus, jubet hoc diſcedere templo. Rex divum & ſtygium, rurſus remeare ſub orcum. Tu tacitus quare hæc noſtra altaria linque.* Likewiſe that which *Juſtin Martyr*, who wrote in the ſecond century, cites of the oracle of *Apollo*, in theſe words. *Soli Chaldæi ſapiunt: & hebræa virum, gens; qui puro haud gentum, venerantur pectore Numen. Juſt. Mart. p.* 16. I confeſs thoſe with many paſſages of the *Sybills* I ſometimes judged to be no other, than the *piæ fraudes* of ſome chriſtians, which I know is the judgment of many; but on more ſerious enquiry, I cannot ſee how theſe poſſibly can be caſt or rejected, where ſuch clear and pungent evidences are of their truth, as, 1. That ſuch a force put upon the Devil to confeſs the truth of chriſtianity, is that which hath cleareſt ſcripture light and precedent for the ſame *Acts* xvi. 17. *Acts* xix. 15. 2. As it is ſure, the Devils believe and tremble, and that there is no poſſibility for *Atheiſm*, or queſtioning the truth of the ſcripture by thoſe reprobate ſpirits, there ſeems no cauſe for any to heſitate at ſuch an enforcement as this from the Lord to confeſs the ſame, as a witneſs of his ſoveraignty over them. 3. It is clear alſo, that upon this account the *Roman* ſenate was then forced to forbid the reading of the *Sybills*, as well as of the ſcripture, by publick edict; leſt thus any ſhould be ſtaggered about the *Pagan* religion; as moſt ancient records of thoſe times witneſs, and is particularly cited by *Juſt. Mart. Apol.* 2. p. 82. and *Hottinger* holds forth *hiſt. lib.* 1. p. 55. 4. There is no poſſible eviting that citation of the oracle, at *Cumæ*, by *Virg. Eclog.* 6. which ſo evidently points at the incarnation of Chriſt, and being born of a *Virgin*, and was ſo near the

time of that *Aſinius Pollio*, to whom in flattery he applieth this. 5. Tho theſe are not to be owned as any ſeal or confirmation to the chriſtian faith, but to leave the heathens thus more inexcuſable, whoſe religion was to worſhip the Devil; yet may it be clear, what horrid impiety this ſhould have been for any Chriſtians to obtrude ſuch a falſhood on the world, if the truth thereof had not been evident; yea, how is it poſſible for this to paſs without ſome publick contradiction thereto by the heathen adverſaries, and ſuch knowing criticks amongſt them; as *Lucian*, *Porphiry*, *Celſus*, and *Libanius* the *Sophiſt* were in theſe times?

Sect. 12. It was remarkable then, whilſt Satan is beat off his throne, by this fall of the oracles, what ſtrugglings he ſtill hath to counteract the goſpel, by ſome lying wonders, in oppoſition to thoſe extraordinary ſigns, which were then given to confirm the truth; as in *Simon Magus* whoſe dreadful cloſe our church writers hold forth; but moſt remarkably in ſetting up that notable *Magician*, *Apollonius Thianæus*, one beyond moſt that ever the world knew of that kind, yea, ſuch as *Hierocles* brings in, to compeat with thoſe miracles of the goſpel; but how quickly, as in a moment, did that helliſh vapour exhaled out of the bottomleſs pit to trouble the air, in a little, evaniſh and diſappear?

Sect. 13. It was remarkable what breathing for a time the chriſtian church, with its firſt upbreaking got, during the reign of *Tiberius Caligula*, and *Claudius*, which though ſhort, yet was until that bleſſed ſeed of chriſtianity, in a great meaſure was ſown among the nations by the preached goſpel, and had begun to take root, e're that dreadful impetuous ſtorm of perſecution, which came after, broke up. *Tiberius* being certified by *Pilate* out of *Paleſtine*, concerning the affairs of Chriſt, propoſed to the Senate his being reckoned amongſt the Gods, which they oppoſing, he threatened it ſhould be dangerous for any to accuſe a chriſtian, as *Tertul.* relates *Apol. c.* 5. 21. *Euſeb. lib.* ii. *c.* 2. alſo *Gildas* in his *epiſtles*, upon which it was judged after the killing of *Stephen*, that perſecution ſo quickly ceaſed, through fear of *Tiberius*. Thus the Lord in his bleſſed way diſpoſing that the ſeed of the goſpel ſhould get a ſowing time, and come to ſome ſolid growth, before any ſharp and great ſtorm, and the truth be received before the trial came, yea, that Chriſt himſelf in the power of his word came firſt to enſure the heart, before his croſs, and a time of perſecution.

Sect 14. We ſee the firſt entry of the church's ſufferings from the *Gentiles* by a *Nero*, than whom none more viſibly could be ever known, tranſformed into the image of the Devil; yea, ſuch a monſter as at laſt the *Roman Senate* declared him to be *Hoſtis Patriæ*, *& Hoſtis humani generis*: That thus it might be in the bleſſed diſpoſal of the Lord diſcernible to all. 1. By what ſpirit ſuch an inſtrument was acted forth to exerciſe thoſe cruelties then among the chriſtians, as human nature though corrupt, yet could not but ſtand at. 2. What a more excellent ſpirit, and invincible power was in thoſe to ſupport and overcome ſuch a fury. 3. That then the great ſtandard of Satans kingdom was thus remarkably ſet up, and brought to the fields againſt the kingdom of Chriſt, by ſuch a ſpirit of perſecution; and then did open war begin againſt the goſpel by the world; which though not always in a like manner, or by the ſame weapons, hath theſe 1500 Years paſt ſucceſſively continued, what this ſore perſecution by *Nero* was, *Church Hiſtories* give but little light thereto; but I ſhall offer another *Martyrology* for this, which none willingly will judge to be given as an intended witneſs to the chriſtian truth, out of *Cornel. Tacit.* whoſe words are theſe. " *Nero* " having ſet *Rome* on fire, to extinguiſh the rumor thereof, did falſly ac-

" cuſe

" cuſe and puniſh with exquiſite torments thoſe whom the people then cal-
" led chriſtians, Firſt, they were apprehended, who confeſſed themſelves to
" be chriſtians, then an huge multitude were convicted for ſetting the city on
" fire, but as he ſaith, for that hatred all men had againſt them, ſcorns alſo
" were added to their ſufferings; ſome were covered with beaſts skins to
" be torn by dogs, ſome were crucified, and ſome burnt, and when the day
" failed, they were burnt to give light by night, whilſt *Nero* made his garden
" fit for that ſpectacle; ſo as pity was by others taken, ſeeing they ſuffered not
" for any common good, but to ſatisfie his cruelty," thus *Tacitus lib.* xv. *cap.* 44. which *Juvenal* alſo holds forth.

SECT. 15. It may be truly ſaid, and on cleareſt grounds demonſtrable, that the Lord's way with the *Gentile* church in the firſt inbringing thereof, and for two ages after, was as a continued miracle, when theſe are conſidered and brought near our thoughts. 1. How it is ſo obvious, that that very time in the firſt two centuries of the church's hotteſt perſecution was that time, wherein the chriſtian church ſo remarkably ſpread in the world, yea, her begun declining did no leſs obſervably contemporate with that ſun-ſhine which followed of outward peace and proſperity, after *Conſtantine*'s time; a truth ſo known and undeniable, that it yet ſhould be to us as it were a preſent object of ſenſe this day. 2. That marvelous reſolution and joy which then attended chriſtians in their extremeſt ſufferings, as they could not ſmoother or conceal the truth thereof, to the aſtoniſhment of the world, when nothing could be a greater contradiction to ſenſe and reaſon; here was that pretended *Apathy* of the ancient *Stoicks*, which they owned in their doctrine but not example, in another manner to be underſtood, not that they wanted ſenſe and feeling of their pain and ſufferings, but theſe were made ſweet and eaſy, by a more ſenſible over-powering taſte and ſealing of the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt. 3. How here was a bearing up with more than human ſtrength againſt a cruelty, ſo viſibly inhuman and ſavage. 4. As it's clear from the primitive hiſtories of the church then, what amazement and conviction was thus enforced on the conſcience of the adverſaries, as it put them to enquire into the cauſes of their ſufferings: As *Tertullian* ſhews thus, *Quiſque enim tantam tolerantiam ſpectans, ut aliquo ſcrupulo percuſſus inquirere accenditur, quid ſit in causâ, & ubi cognoverit veritatem; ipſe ſtatim ſequitur.* Tertul. Apol. cap. 50. *To wit, that whilſt on-lookers ſaw ſuch reſolution in the ſufferings of the ſaints, were put to ſearch what might be the cauſe, and when once they knew the truth, did themſelves alſo fall in love therewith to follow it. And further thus, Quis enim non in contemplatione ejus concutitur ad requirendum quid intùs in re ſit, quis non ubi requiſivit, accedit, ubi acceſſit, pati non exoptat? that is, who then in beholding this, was not ſhaken in that manner, as to a ſerious enquiry what might be in the matter, and who thus did once ſearch after the truth, did not alſo engage therewith, yea, who embraced it whoſe choice and deſire was not alſo to ſuffer for the ſame?* 5. The greateſt of Atheiſts muſt ſee, that thoſe did not thus ſuffer, to propagate a known deluſion, and that ſuch joy and exultation of ſpirit amidſt thoſe torments, is not conceiveably without a divine immediate aſſiſtance, as the ſame *Tertullian* who lived in the ſecond century, thus atteſts the *Heathens* herein, *Cum omni ſævitiâ veſtrâ concertamus, etiam ultrò erumpentes, magiſque damnati, quam abſoluti gaudemus.* That is, *We conflict and are helped to overcome your greateſt cruelty, yea, cheerfully to go through all, rejoicing more in being ſentenced and condemned than in abſolution.* 6. How mean and feeble Perſons, as many of thoſe were, (when conſidered what they were in themſelves) ſhould thus endure that, which

which would have fainted, and been a terror to the greateſt natural courage.

Sect. 16. It was in thoſe times that this might be clearly ſeen, how ſuch ſtrange and amazing effects of the goſpel upon chriſtians were not more obvious than ſuch judicial effects of rejecting the ſame were upon others; with that rage and malice againſt the truth, which did in ſuch a manner then burſt forth, as the world had not known before, yea, no intereſt can be inſtanced from any records of former times had ſuch a ſtrange oppoſition and contrariety thereto, as the truth of the goſpel; a myſtery which in ages before was not known by ſuch appearances until then, what that enmity between the ſeed of the woman, and that of the ſerpent was, as may be evident. 1. That inſatiable thirſt after chriſtian blood, as *Sulpitius tells the world was no leſs exhauſted then by one perſecution, than by the moſt bloody wars.* 2. How this ſtrange violence and rage againſt the truth of the goſpel could be owned upon no intereſt or private quarrel, but againſt ſuch as ſhewed greateſt kindneſs to their perſecutors, and greateſt freedom from revenge; ſuch, whom *Juſtin Martyr* and *Euſebius* alſo in his *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, lib.* viii. *cap.* 8. ſheweth that the adverſaries could not deny ſuch tenderneſs of chriſtians towards them, as they prayed for their perſecuting *Emperors*, for all the people that looked on, for the judge that condemned them, yea, for the *Executioner*, to ſhew the world how far the ſpirit of chriſtians ariſes above the world, and what a ſpirit that muſt be, that did oppoſe and perſecute theſe. 3. Such cruelty to be thus exerciſed on all conditions, of women and children, which almoſt from ſavages would have pleaded compaſſion and tenderneſs, as *Lactantius* ſhews, *Ecce ſexus infirmus, & fragilis ætas, dilacerari ſe toto corpore, urique perpetitur, non neceſſitate, quia licet vitare ſi vellent, ſed voluntate, quia confident in deo. Lact. lib.* v. *c.* 1. *Which was, that ſuch then of that tender ſex of women, and thoſe of ſo young years, did endure to have their bodies rent, yea, the flames of the fire, and this upon choice, and no enforcement of neceſſity, ſince they could have eſcaped, but becauſe they adventured on God himſelf.* 4. This might be notour from the manner of ſuch perſecutions, as *Juſtin Martyr* ſhews, how uſual then it was to expoſe them to wild beaſts, and invent torments for putting chriſtians to death, but withal adds this, the more theſe were tried, the further increaſe had the church. To witneſs that dreadful and black day the light of the goſpel puts on ſuch as reject it, and bring forth what is latent in nature, that they could not have believed themſelves, yea, that ſomething further than mens natural enmity is here: to draw forth this to ſuch an aſtoniſhing and height of fury and violence, and the very immediate power and incitement of the Devil.

Sect. 17. Whilſt Satan thus eſſayed but in vain by ſuch as *Nero* and *Domitian* to withſtand the goſpel, and ſuch firſt buddings thereof, we ſee a little after how he tries the ſame weapon with more ſubtilty in putting on, ſuch as *Trajan*, *Adrian* and *Antoninus Pius*, to follow the ſame work of perſecuting the church, thus to cauſe in the world a greater abhorring againſt the truth in its being aſſaulted by ſuch Emperors, that for their juſtice and moderation in regard of the laws, were ſo endeared to the Empire. But as no weapon formed againſt the truth can proſper, this did not lett that marvelous ſpreading of the goſpel then. But a clear commentary was thus given upon that ſcripture truth, that the wiſdom of the world is enmity with God, and none ſtated more remarkably at a diſadvantage with the goſpel than ſuch: yea, what a change that inbred contrariety in men againſt the truth, will cauſe on the greateſt moraliſts, thoſe of moſt calm and peaceable diſpoſitions,

ſition, to a breaking forth in rage, when once they begin to be ſcorched with the heat and power thereof.

Sect. 18. It was then, that this immediate appearance of the Lord, to give ſome breathing and lucid interval to the church, amidſt ſuch laſting ſtorms, might be evident. 1. In enforcing ſome of the adverſaries themſelves, ſuch as *Plinius Junior*, who was in greateſt repute in thoſe times to acquit the chriſtians of what they were charged with, as by his letter to *Trajan*, which gave ſome ſtop to the preſent perſecution then, is clear: for he ſhews *how far that infection* (as he calleth it there) *had crept into cities, towns and villages, and that except in the matter of their religion, they were known to abſtain from all groſs crimes, to keep their faith, and defraud no man*; yea, which is more obſervable in the cloſe of his letter, doth propoſe to the Emperor a more favourable dealing towards the chriſtian church, as the probable means to prevent their further increaſe, which did the more advance, the more violence had been uſed againſt them. *This letter with* Trajan's *anſwer by Tertull. Apol. & Euſ. Eccleſ. hiſt. lib.* iii. *c.* 33. are there ſet down at large. 2. By that extraordinary appearance of the Lord in anſwering the chriſtirn legion under *Aurelius Antonius*, when the *Roman* army was at a remarkable expence in war with the *Vandales* and *Sarmates*, which was ſo convincing both to the Emperor, and his whole army, as enforced this account by his letter to the Senate and people of *Rome* thereof; *That being with his army ready to periſh for want of water, and environed by the enemy, having ſought of their country gods, but in vain, for help, that chriſtian legion, which then was amongſt them, fell proſtrate on the ground, and by prayer obtained ſuch an anſwer as there fell amongſt us* (ſaith the Emperor) *a moſt pleaſant cooling ſhower from heaven, but againſt the enemy a ſtorm of hail mingled with lightning, ſo as preſently we found the invincible aid of the moſt mighty God. Upon which he orders all perſecutions throughout the Empire to ceaſe againſt the chriſtians:* This in the ſame age doth *Juſtin Martyr* ſet down in his *Apology* to the *Roman Senate*, and is at length alſo cited by *Tertullian* and *Aroſius*, who herein appeals the adverſary to the *Emperor's* letters in their own ſtanding records. 3. Which is moſt remarkable, that even under the reign of *Commodus* the *Emperor*, ſuch a bloody monſter and ſcourge to the *Roman Senate* and *Empire*, the church of Chriſt then got a ſweet and favourable calm, with ſome reſt for a ſeaſon, yea, more than under the reign of ſome more favourable in their natural diſpoſition, to ſhew that dominion which the glorious God doth exerciſe, not only over the greateſt but the worſt of men, and how the moſt notable mercies and advantages of the church are moſt uſually brought forth againſt all viſible appearances.

Sect. 19. This alſo for the church's ſupport and ſtrengthning in thoſe times, ſhould not want a grave remark in the Lord's calling forth ſome with ſingular advantage of gifts and human learning, to oppoſe againſt the ſubtil cavils and reproach of the adverſary for clearing of the truth; ſo as we may ſee when ſuch as *Porphiry*, *Lucius*, *Celſus*, &c. were at work to diſcredit the chriſtians by their writings, ſuch excellent men were no leſs diſcernibly brought forth, for this preſent ſervice of the church, as *Quadratus*, *Ariſtides*, whoſe notable *Apologies* for the truth of Chriſt, the one to *Trajan*, the other to *Adrian*, with ſome conviction, that this was enforced upon them, are cited by *Euſeb. hiſt. lib.* iv. and *Jerome* in his *Catalogue*, and *Juſtin Martyr*, who wrote a twofold *Apology*, the one to the Senate, and the other to *Antonius* the *Emperor*, and a little thereof, *Tertullian* and *Melito* of *Sardis*, whoſe weighty arguments are ſet down by moſt of ancient church hiſtories,

that it thus may be ſeen, no time ſince that marvelous erection of the chriſtian church, hath wanted ſome diſcernible out-lettings of the ſpirit for its preſent exigencies: Yea, that ſuch is the truth of the goſpel, that it comes with the furtheſt and cleareſt advantage to convince the judgment as well as to engage the affections, and to offer it ſelf to trial to all, anent its truth, by undeniable reaſon, as well as experience. Thus did they appeal their adverſaries anent the truth, with ſuch advantage, to enforce a conviction upon them, if theſe things could poſſibly be denied. 1. That their gods were forced to confeſs themſelves to be Devils, as *Tertullian* ſhews, *Apol. cap.* 23. *And why do you not herein,* (ſaith he) *believe, when they ſpeak truth, who yet believe them when they ſpeak lies, whilſt you ſee this could not be their own choice, whilſt they witneſs againſt themſelves, if they were not enforced.* 2. That where-ever the name of Chriſt was called upon, thoſe ſpirits whom they worſhipped, were under a viſible reſtraint, as to their power; yea, the preſence of a chriſtian, when the *Heathens* were about their divination, and by their prieſts ſeeking anſwer from the Devil; did ſo viſibly fruſtrate thoſe eſſays, as made them cry out, *they were hindered by ſome of the company.* See *Lactantius lib.* iv. *c.* 27. 3. That they could not but ſee in delivering the doctrine of the goſpel and profeſſion thereof, there was no tentation, nor any poſſible advantage to be looked for from the world, but did viſibly counteract any ſuch end, as repute and credit in the earth, outward riches or delights of the fleſh, their whole life a continued courſe of ſuffering and trouble, no viſible grounds of hope, *but were of all men moſt miſerable, if in this life they had owned their hope,* and had no other aſſurances than what is here. 4. If that doctrine they profeſſed and bare witneſs to of the goſpel, did not bring with it the greateſt enforcements of ſincerity, truth in the heart and inward parts, and ſpeaking of the truth in every thing, whatever hazard ſhould follow. 5. If ſuch was not the doctrine of chriſtianity, as all might ſee, ſo far above the reach of human wiſdom, the furtheſt learning of the *Greeks,* as was wholly impoſſible, that ſuch perſons as the Apoſtles were, could ever have had or known this of themſelves. 6. That the chriſtian doctrine, and that only could ſettle the ſoul on a ſure foundation, whilſt the moſt knowing amongſt the *heathens* were in ſuch continual fluctuating and uncertainty about any truth of religion, or an after ſtate; and moſt of their gods, as *Jupiter, Saturn,* &c. by that very account themſelves give, were ſome of the vileſt of men, and had been in the former ages, notable for oppreſſion and villanies. 7. That the very myſteries of the heathen religion were horrid and impure, ſo as they durſt not let them be common and known; but O that infinite purity of ſcripture, *Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth, Joh.* xvii. 8. This alſo the *heathens* could not know how to deny, that chriſtianity brought with it ſuch a publick bleſſing to mankind, did ſo undeniably tend to a perfecting of human nature, and engaging to thoſe duties of mutual profit and ſubſerviency amongſt men towards one another, ſuch as love, tenderneſs, ſympathy with the afflicted, which by their own greateſt writers was accounted puſilanimity, and as a vice rather than a virtue, as *Laertius in vita Zenonis* expreſly ſhews, *p.* 512. and of what ſingular uſe to prevent thoſe imbittering torments, diſorders and perturbations, that as natively follow a proud and vindictive ſpirit, as the ſhadow the body, by its bleſſed tendency to move the ſoul, yea, transform it into humility and meekneſs, and what a luſtre it puts not on men only, but on thoſe very parts of the earth, where chriſtianity doth in its vigour ſhine forth.

SECT. 20. It is remarkable, how in the very cloſe of the church's ſufferings, from the heathen adverſary, that laſt aſſault under *Diocleſian,* was of all

moſt grievous and ſearching; whoſe expreſs edicts were then given forth not againſt chriſtians only as to perſonal perſecution, but againſt chriſtianity, and who laid forth himſelf more than any before, to have ſtruck, if poſſible at the whole root, by ſubtilty as well as violence, ſo as this greateſt darkneſs, did go but a very little before the dawning of an univerſal peace, but with theſe convincing advantages to the truth. 1. *In the bringing forth thus* a moſt remarkable witneſs thereto, that when he purſued ſo much the delivering up of their Bibles, which he moſt vigorouſly then eſſayed, and when it was ineffectual, ſought but a leaf of clean paper, as a teſt of their yielding; the chriſtians then chooſed the furtheſt of ſufferings, rather than to come this length: upon which that name was given to any, who thus yielded, of being *Traditories.* 2. It was no leſs clear, that whilſt this *Emperor*, in his boaſting confidence had cauſed erect a pillar, with that inſcription on it DIOCLES. CÆS. AUGUST. SUPERSTITIONE CHRISTI UBIQUE DELETA: CULTU DEORUM PROPAGATO: As *Baronius* at length, *Vide Hotting. Part.* 1. *cap.* 4. *pag.* 182. And thus ſung the triumph before the victory, he was broken in all his attempts, and ſo caſt down with the church's further riſe and growth, as at laſt he reſigned the *Empire.* 3. Then alſo was this marvelous appearance of the Lord, when the church ſeemed to be at the very loweſt, that ſo very ſhort a time ſhould intervene betwixt a *Diocleſian* and a *Conſtantine.*

SECT. 21. We ſee in thoſe times when the church's wreſtlings and perſecutions, were ſo remarkable, ſuch great examples of judgment alſo ſet up, and made obvious for the worlds obſerving as might infer ſome conviction therewith, that aſſuredly they were no ordinary or caſual occurrents, or ſuch as have had uſual preſidents in the change of human affairs, but the very immediate appearance of God made diſcernible therein, to whom the blood of the ſaints is precious. 1. It is known that *Pilate* was ſo continually vexed by *Cajus the Emperor*; even he, who had over the wreſtlings of a natural conſcience given forth that ſentence againſt our bleſſed Lord, as he was enforced to kill himſelf and be his own executioner, as *Hierome in his Chronicle of the* Roman *hiſtory*, Euſebius *in his eccleſiaſtick hiſtory, out of the* Greek *writers of the Olympiads, lib.* ii. *cap.* 7. Alſo *Caſſiodorus* in his *Chronicle* do with one conſent witneſs, as *Uſher* in his *Annals*, hath ſet down; and certainly was then ſuch a paſſage, conſidering the party to whom it relates, as would be gravely noticed, and with the exacteſt enquiry by chriſtians of that time, yea this muſt have been ſo publick, as all may judge the convoy and tranſmitting thereof could not eaſily have come under miſtake, to thoſe times wherein *Euſebius* and *Hierome* wrote. 2. We may ſee in that inſtance of *Herod Agrippa*, the very firſt of the kings of the earth, that ſtretched forth his hand againſt the chriſtian church, a publick beacon of divine judgment, thus ſet up for the great men and *Monarchs* of after ages to take warning by; who, after he had killed *James* the brother of *John* by the ſword, in a publick appearance after the blaſphemous ſhoutings of the people, was ſmitten by the angel of God, *Acts* xii. 17. Which (the very ſame in ſubſtance) is related by *Joſephus, Antiq. lib.* xix. *c. ult. That when he had finiſhed the third year of his reign, and at Ceſarea ſolemnized ſome plays for* Cæſar's *health, to which a great number of noblemen and young perſons came, on the ſecond day thereof, he goes in his princely robes, rich and curiouſly wrought with ſilver, which by the ſuns reflection made an extraordinary luſtre, and whilſt upon ſome flatterers ſaluting him as God, he did not refuſe nor reject ſuch impious adulation, did a little after ſee an Owl over his head, a prognoſtick of his ruin, was ſtruck to the heart, with moſt grievous torments in his belly, ſo as he was forced to turn to his friends, and ſay, behold I, who by*

you

you was called a God, am commanded out of this life, and my present fate gives the lye to your flatteries, being forced to death whom you saluted as immortal; after which his pains increasing in great extremity, he died. Which passage besides scripture authority may be convincing to the greatest *Atheist*, to see whilst it is one in substance therewith, is in so different a manner, and with other circumstances by *Josephus*, set down; and how far this was from any intended concurrence with the *evangelist Luke* therein, but as a part of the history of those times; yea was by him written in the very same age when it fell out, an occurrent of that nature, as concerned all *Judea* to know, and could not from any private information be obvious to mistake, which was then so publick and famous in the view of the world. 3. We may then also see that famous apostate *Lucian*, who lived near the first *Century*, once a profest minister of the gospel at *Anticch*, but after an avowed *Atheist*, and in hatred of the christian faith, a promoter of *Paganism*, as those horrid *Dialogues* by him set forth, shew, was at last torn in pieces by dogs, as *Suidas*, with other writers of the church history then shew. 4. It may be an astonishing remark to following ages, that for the first two hundred years after Christ, wherein were near thirty two *Emperors*, not three of them was without either a violent death, or something singularly tragick in their close, as may be clear from the whole consent of the records of that time. 5. It is most evident also, under those sore and continued persecutions of the christian church, what remarkable judgments were then inflicted on the *Roman Empire*, and how heavy and sad the hand of men, and their yoke was upon them, by those bloody and cruel tyrants, who for most of those times were set over them, who would not come under the sweet and desirable yoke of Jesus Christ in his offer of the gospel; there being no histories can shew such a *series* of visible monsters as most of those were, excepting *Trajan*, and few else, who then successively were advanced to rule, so as in those two ages, when the church history might be read in *characters* of blood, and such continued sufferings of the saints, the tragedies of the *roman Empire* might be as obvious and have as large a room in the records of that time.

SECT. 22. It was in those trying times, we may see a singular providence of the Lord, to secure that blessed unvaluable record of the scriptures, and particularly that of the *New Testament* in all the parts thereof, after its delivery to the church, beyond the possibility of hazard, or access of obtruding any false transcript; so as then, and in all after times, the churches of Christ might even with the greatest advantage of reason and moral inducements be assured anent the *Canon*, and what is truly canonical and what not; 1. By the swift and astonishing conquest the gospel then had in so short a time, thro' most of the known world, so as in the age of the apostles, not only in *Asia*, but places most remote, where famous churches were planted, there was necessarily enforced, a diffusing of innumerable copies of the *original*, the *Greek* then being so universally known, even whilst the *Autographs of the evangelists and apostles were still extant in the church; as* Tertullian *shews they were in his time, who lived in the second century*: And it is sure no other way could they make use of, for delivering of the doctrine of christianity, or instructing the people there anent, but from those pure fountains themselves, which they had to shew as their authority and warrant; for the doctrine of implicite faith was not then known; but all expresly called to search the scriptures. 2. By those sharp and extreme persecutions the church then was under; when to profess the christian faith, and suffer for the same, was every where so inseparably linked, as could not but enforce each christian to a near and personal converse with that inestimably divine record, for having some copy under their reach, to know the solidity of that

that doctrine which they were to seal with their blood and adventure on into eternity. 3. By those various controversies and outbreakings of error then in the church, with such heat and animosity as followed thereon, which necessarily enforced all who loved the truth, to be sure and confirmed from the text and letter it self. 4. By that necessity the church was then put to on the furthest enquiry, and certainty of what was truly canonical from the upbreaking of some counterfeit books, as a special engine of the Devil to darken the truth, such as the *Acts* of *Paul* the epistle of *Barnabas* and revelation of *Peter*; but this tended in the blest providence of the Lord to its further clearing; being thus after an exactest tryal exauctorated by consent of all the churches of Christ, and what was truly canonick more known. 5. By that remarkable providence for the church's confirming, of the continuance so long of *John* the evangelist after the rest of the apostles, to some more than an hundred years after the birth of Christ, as *Irinæus* shews, *Lib.* ii. *p.* 192. with other ancient writers: Whose work was peculiarly given him of the Lord, to shut up and seal the *Canon* of the whole scripture; and then lived, when he could peruse and attest the whole books of the *New Testament*, and difference them from any counterfeit writings; that thus the *Canon* of the *New Testament* might be unanswerably cleared by apostolick authority; which *Eusebius* expresly shews also from the testimony of the most famous writers of those times, how on the earnest desire of the *Asiatick* churches, the whole of the *New Testament* was confirmed by the attestation of *John* thereto. 6. By that singular advantage, in the counsel of the Lord for preserving his truth, that the doctrine of the gospel by the apostles and evangelists, was delivered over, not only in writ, but in such a form of sound words for the church to keep close by, as left no liberty for after times in the least to alter the same. 7. From the christian church, being so absolutely founded in the whole both of faith and practice on the *New Testament*, as well as the Old; so as with the first spreading of the churches of Christ among the *Gentiles*, it may be seen, the same use, and continued improvement of those records was as necessarily required to know the certainty thereof; as *Britain*, or any other kingdom can have of those fundamental statutes and laws, on which the very standing and safety of the nation most leans; for though the validity, or sure convey of private record might possibly come under debate, where there is not evidence enough to demonstrate the contrary; could any judge, or have the least hesitation thereanent, that the *Isle* of *Britain*, or the *German Empire*, were not to the furthest secure, anent the certainty of those statutes and securities, with which their greatest intereſt and property is in a manner incorporate, and indissolubly conjoined: so as not to know from one age to another the undoubted truth and authority thereof, when such constant and continued use in application of those in the whole concerns of the nation, is so undeniable? 8. By that providence in directing those divine records, and delivering them over to the church, not as a publick monument to be kept only, but for each private christian's use and comfort whereon they must live and feed in their journey through time; so as it may be truly said, not particular churches alone, but that innumerable company of christians dispersed through the world in those first times, were the common liberty of those blessed records; though with the first planting of some of the churches, some part thereof could not be so soon spread amongst them, as the rest, being the last of canonick scripture written, which occasioned some questioning at first by a few, until its authority was more fully known and received. 9. By those many commentaries and other works on the scripture so near to the first times of the gospel, which were then publickly spread, and frequent citations of most of

the *New Teſtament*, as it may be clear they had the very ſame ſcripture, and knew no other than we have now. 10. By thoſe various tranſlations alſo in divers languages, which were ſo early ſpread, as the *Syriack* not without ground judged to be in the very firſt century, the ancient *Latin*, which was long before *Hierom*'s tranſlation, yea near alſo with the firſt age, as may be evident from the church-hiſtories, with other tranſlations, ſuch as the *Arabick* that though with ſome ſmall differences, yet in ſubſtance retains the whole of the chriſtian doctrine.

Sect. 23. What hath in after ages ſeemed to be the greateſt loſs to the church, and much regrated by many, that ſo great a want now is of ſome clear and particular account from the hiſtories of that time, of the lives and actings of the apoſtles after their diſperſing through the world, and of the planting of particular churches; ſhould if ſeriouſly conſidered, tend much to our further confirming in the truth; where all may ſee ſo convincing a providence from the Lord, to prevent after times laying that weight on example, or practice of the primitive ſaints, which alone muſt be on the ſcripture it ſelf, whereto (as it is too obvious) they have been ſo eagerly prone: The God of truth thus fore-ſeeing, what need there was for the church in following ages, to be kept off this rock of following the traditions of men, or leaning thereon, more than on thoſe living oracles of ſacred truth, that we might know no copy elſe to write after, no human authority to compete therewith, but this alone to be the rule and ſtandard, by which the doctrine of the church is to be tried, and at whoſe bar and deciſion it muſt ſtand.

Sect. 24. Yet is it clear from the ſureſt records of thoſe times with what luſtre and advantage, the chriſtian church, and primitive chriſtians then did appear, who were a part of the firſt fruits of the goſpel amongſt the *Gentiles*, and as the firſt copy taken off that divine original pattern the ſcripture it ſelf; ſuch as walk'd in ſingleneſs of heart, and in the joy and comfort of the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe firſt love is ſo particularly mentioned, *Rev.* ii. 3. and as *Ægeſippus* cited by *Euſebius*, *lib.* iii. *cap.* 29. ſhews that unto thoſe times, which was that of *Trajans*, the church of Chriſt remained a pure and uncorrupted virgin: For ſuch, as endeavoured to corrupt the perfect rule and ſound preaching of the word, then hid themſelves, in ſome ſecret and obſcure place: But though ſuch particular account thereof be wanting, as hath been much wiſhed for, yet it is ſure that thoſe viſible realities of the ancient holineſs of that time, and what a rare ſight then the chriſtian church was of an excellent ſociety, though in the world, yet living much above it, may to this day be on cleareſt grounds demonſtrable. 1. In that primitive zeal and fervor that was for the ſpreading of the kingdom of Chriſt through the dark world, and at that rate, thoſe whom the Lord called forth on ſuch ſervice, did adventure in the moſt rude and ſavage parts, with no viſible encouragement, no incitements, but the ſervice of ſuch a maſter, which they more valued, than any trade the merchants of the earth have, for gold and ſilver; ſo as it is convincingly tranſmitted, what a victory ſuch then had over the fleſh, with the world and ſenſual pleaſures there; and how thoſe who got the firſt trial of the goſpel, found it aſſuredly to be a matter of ſubſtance, and truth, and no ſhadow; and put their ſeal thereto. 2. It is known what ſuch then were, in a ſingular uſefulneſs and largeneſs of heart, for the intereſt of others; ſo as even the corrupt world could not but ſee thoſe were the common good, and bleſſing of mankind, whom they did thus perſecute; as both *Tertull. Apol. pag.* 83. & *Euſebius* out of *Dionyſius L.* vii. *Cap.* 17. do at large witneſs, how convincingly; *The primitive chriſtians did appear, not only in the exerciſes of holineſs*

holineſs and fervent worſhipping God, but in thoſe duties of humanity and ſympathy with others, yea not amongſt themſelves alone, but toward the heathens alſo, in owning the afflicted with their help, regarding the ſick and diſtreſt; not ſcaring at thoſe diſeaſes which were moſt loathſome and contagious, without reſpect to their own hazard therein, from the love of Chriſt. 3. We may know from the whole conſent of the hiſtories of that time, what choice and excellent perſons, many of the ancient *Eremites* were, who under thoſe bloody perſecutions in the firſt and ſecond centuries, when they thus were forced to retire, did ſequeſter themſelves from the world, for the exerciſes of godlineſs ſearching out the myſteries of the kingdom of God from the ſcriptures, yea how far they were from that way, or following ſuch unwarranted acts of mortification and abſtinence, as the legends of the *Romiſh* church, did in after times admire and cry up; and have been an effectual engine of the Devil, to bring the truth of holineſs, and what was unqueſtionably obvious there anent in firſt times under diſcredit. It is true, they were not of one rank, as the moſt *Eccleſ.* writers ſhew, ſome keeping together more in ſocieties, who were indeed ſeminaries for the ſervice of the church, amidſt the ſharp perſecutions, which then were; others have been more abſtract and retired in their living alone, yet this account is moſt certainly tranſmitted even of ſuch, how laborious they were in their duty, not laying themſelves aſide from being uſeful to others, even to the meaneſt, where they had acceſs; of the firſt ſort, we find a long continuance in the church, as it evidently appears, with whom *Epiphanius* from his youth was brought up, and gives a moſt honourable account of them in his works, and *Ruffinus lib.* ii. *cap.* 8. ſhews his viſiting of thoſe in *Egypt*, and what excellent perſons they were, even in that time. 4. We may ſee, with what luſtre of the truth, of holineſs and ſimplicity of the goſpel, is the remembrance of thoſe, who then were called *Culdees* in ſeveral places of *Scotland*, from their being ſuch aſſiduous worſhippers of God, to this very day tranſmitted by the moſt ſure and ancient records we have of that time, who as *Buchannan* ſhews in his *Chronicle*, came into the country in *Dioclesian's* time, being then forced to flee to theſe northern places from the violence of that perſecution, and by a remarkable providence, thus determined for ſpreading of the goſpel there, whoſe work was not only convincing in the ſecret exerciſes of holineſs, but in publick preaching did lay forth themſelves, for bringing in the people ſo ſavage and barbarous then, to the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and for ſome ages after had a viſible ſucceſſion of others, who followed them in this bleſſed work, for whom thoſe times had ſuch veneration, as their cells were afterwards turned into churches, and bear to this day their names, who then were among the firſt publiſhers of the goſpel. 5. It is ſure alſo, that ſuch viſible realities of the ſtate of the churches of Chriſt then, tranſmitted even to this day, as all may ſee, what an innumerable company, in theſe times, loved not their life to the death, but chooſed the greateſt of torment for Jeſus Chriſt and his truth, as the *Martyrologies* of the church do clearly witneſs, and thus what fervency of love, ſubdueneſs to the fleſh, and the world, with the lively hope and aſſurance of that glory to come did ſhine forth; the truth of which marvelous effects, muſt convincingly witneſs both the reality of the cauſe, and the excellency thereof.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

SECT. 1. THat great event and revolution of providence, when the ſet time was come for giving reſt to the churches after ſuch ſore and continued ſufferings was ſuch, as no ſerious obſerver, but even at this day may ſee as it were, in ſome manner preſent, the very immediate finger and appearance there of God. 1. In calling for one, from ſo remote a corner as *Britain*, where *Conſtantine* then was, to ſerve his counſel, in breaking that formidable power of the *heathen Empire*, when *Maxentius* the ſon of *Maximinianus Herculeus*, an horrid flagitious perſon, an avowed adverſary to the chriſtians, was by the *Roman* legions ſet up. 2. In that remarkable providence of *Maxentius*'s being drawn forth, without the gates of *Rome* with his forces, yea, forced in his flying to take that very ſame bridge for paſſing over the river, which of purpoſe was contrived to enſnare *Conſtantine* and his army, and ſo joined and linked together for that end, which then fell aſunder, as ſoon as he and his army had taken the ſame, where himſelf with the chief of his followers ſunk down and plunged like ſtones in the river; a verifying of that truth which the chriſtian church then was made to obſerve, *That the wicked are ſnared in the work of their own hands*, yea, on ſuch an account to ſign the ſong of *Moſes* at the *Red-ſea*, how the horſe and his rider he had thrown in the ſea, as *Euſebius* and *Socrates*, the firſt of whom lived in the preſent time expreſly witneſs, wherein they have the concurrence of all our church hiſtories. 3. Though it is on no miracles or extraordinary providences we lean, or muſt lay any ſtreſs anent the truth of chriſtianity, who have the ſcripture of God in the *Old* and *New Teſtament* to found on, yet ſince it is an unqueſtionable duty to obſerve the great works of the Lord, and to make a diligent ſearch therein, we muſt alſo conſider that extraordinary and miraculous appearance to *Conſtantine* and his *Army*, which they had of a viſion in the heavens in the noon day, before their engaging with *Maxentius*, of a pillar of light, in ſome form of a croſs, with theſe words moſt legible in *Greek* about the ſame Ἐν τούτῳ νίκα *Socrates lib.* 1. *cap.* 1. *Euſebius lib.* xxii. *cap.* 24. About which being much troubled to know the meaning of ſo ſtupendious a providence, he was that night by an audible voice in his ſleep, ſhewed, that he ſhould cauſe that figure, which was ſhewed to him and his army, to be put forth in his banner to the view of his enemies; a relation indeed ſtrange and aſtoniſhing, but with that advantage of cleareſt evidence, though by human record tranſmitted to after ages, as could almoſt be ſought for the furtheſt moral certainty of any matter of fact, and may cauſe this to take deeper impreſſion on our ſpirits, even in this preſent time if we ſeriouſly conſider. 1. That the account hereof (which by no party within the church then, or in after times, was called in queſtion) was in a ſolemn addreſs after prayer, by the Emperor to God, for revealing of himſelf to him, when he was doubtful and ſolicitous, to know the true object of his adoration, being then no chriſtian, though he had ſome reſpect to that way, from his father *Conſtantin*'s counſel to him on his death bed. 2. That this extraordinary appearance of the Lord, in the calling and the converſion of the firſt chriſtian Emperor, hath ſo obvious a congruity to the firſt calling, in ſuch manner alſo of the great apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, the one by an audible voice, with a great light at the noon-day, the other by ſuch a ſtupendious viſion and brightneſs therewith about the ſame time, the one thus called to go forth and bring in the nations by the word of the goſpel, the other to appear and act by the ſword againſt the heathen adverſary, yea, to bring the firſt chriſtian ſtandard to the

field, as a trophy of the Mediator's conqueſt over them. 3. It is clear, how no advantage thus the *Romiſh* church can have, for that idolatrous abuſe in adoring the *ſign of the croſs*; this being an extraordinary providence at ſuch an exigence, expreſly directed by the Lord, to ſhew *Conſtantine* and his army, they were now called to act for the chriſtian intereſt; and an undoubted miracle from heaven, to confirm before their eyes what they were ſo heſitating about, as to the truth of chriſtianity, yea, by ſuch an hand-writing in the very heavens; to ſhew unto men, that the heathen *Empire* of *Rome* was then weighed, and at a cloſe: And the time now come for Jeſus Chriſt's making himſelf known to the world in another manner than by ſufferings, and taking the fields in a warlike poſture, with garments rolled in blood againſt his greateſt adverſaries. Nor was it then the ſign of the croſs, but a ſight ſome what like it, and after that faſhion as the hiſtories do clearly witneſs; and rather a character of Chriſt's name, as hath been tranſmitted in the ancient coins of *Conſtantine* and other chriſtian *Emperors*, in that form, as it is a mark of the name of Chriſt, with the words Ἐν τέτῳ νίκα, *in hoc Deo vince*, to wit *in Chriſt ye ſhall overcome*. 4. The viſion was not to *Conſtantine* alone, but at the noon-day to his whole army, which *Socrates* ſhews, *lib.* 1. *cap.* 1. did ſo amaze the Emperor, as miſtruſting his own ſight, he demanded of them that were preſent, if they ſaw not the ſame, which when all were forced to confeſs, and were ſure thereof, his mind was then ſettled there anent. 5. We have *Euſebius*, who lived in the very time, making this publick, whilſt many were then alive, who were eye witneſſes thereto, and ſo famous in thoſe days, as no paſſage could have been more known, and eaſily contradicted, if it could have come under queſtion, whilſt the *Heathens* did not then ceaſe by all eſſays to diſcredit the chriſtian cauſe, yea, we find him ſolemnly declare, that e'er he wrote the ſame, he had it alſo by oath atteſted from that good Emperor: And it is known what reſpect both *Hierome* and *Baſilius*, with others of the ancients do witneſs for this *Euſebius*, as a learned and godly man, though ſome few paſſages of his hiſtory, which were more remote from the time he lived, ſeem to have been taken with too much credit from others; he was aſſiſtant at the *Nicene* Councel in condemning *Arius*, though by ſome miſtaken, as if he had favoured and owned his way, there being then another *Euſebius* Biſhop of *Nicomedia*, who in that very time was an avowed patron of *Arianiſm*: and moſt different from this *Euſebius Pamphilus of Ceſarea*. 6. This alſo we have tranſmitted for the certainty of it in that time, not only by hiſtory, but by thoſe ancient medals and coins, ſome of which I doubt not but are yet kept to this day, and *Socrates* ſhews how more than an hundred years after in his time, that that banner was ſtill kept in *Conſtantines's* palace, and is it not alſo convincing, how the truth thereof with the ſetting up of that ſtandard was then publiſhed in the *Roman* army, whilſt *Conſtantine* might have feared ſome dividing thus, and falling off of ſo many to the adverſary, before the battle, by his ſo early declaring himſelf a chriſtian, and to provoke *Licinius*, with whom he was then joined in affinity, a known adverſary to the chriſtians, if ſo great a miracle had not been thus publick and notour, beyond the poſſibility of debate.

Sect. 2. Upon this marvelous change, which was in the ſtate of the church, and ceaſing of outward perſecution, we may have this diſcovery of the truth and tenderneſs of the Lord for his people, in that ſhort reſpite and breathing they then got, that this ſilence in heaven ſhould be but as for half an hour, *Rev.* v. 1. and a lucid interval, only to draw their breath a little before a new trial. 1. To prevent a further ruin, which an outward peace and enjoyment of the world, was like to cauſe in the very power

and vital part of chriſtianity, for it may be aſtoniſhing to conſider, what ground was thus loſt in thoſe few years of the churches reſt, both as to the life and purity of religion, which under her greateſt wreſtlings before, had been remarkably gained. 2. To inſtruct hereby, that no ceſſation the churches of Chriſt muſt look for from war in this militant ſtate, the church being the party alone, with whom the Devil wreſtleth, and then rageth moſt, whilſt the goſpel begins more clearly to ſhine forth. 3. That it is not ſtill in the ſame manner this great adverſary will aſſault, but when reſtrained, to rage by open perſecution, then are the moſt remarkably trying times of the church to be looked for, yea, ſome more ſearching trials than before; as congruouſly ſuited to the condition of ſuch a time.

Sect. 3. When once the churches were at reſt, we ſee the inbreaking of that flood of *Arianiſm* hath its ſeaſon, and advantage to aſſault the truth, yea, in a ſhort time ſo prodigiouſly to ſpread and over-run the chriſtian world, as it ſeemed to carry all before it; an aſſault that ſtruck not at the uppermoſt boughs, but at the very root and being of chriſtianity: But then alſo may be ſeen the truth's advantage, and the Lord's own immediate appearing under ſuch a trial. 1. In renting the vail off many, to bring them to the open view in this dreadful apoſtacy, who had not received the truth in love, and might in the dark trade more to the churches prejudice, than ſhe could after that recover, yea, how herein the earth was made to help the woman, ſuch as only in appearance had owned ſome profeſſion of the goſpel, to drink in this flood. 2. In bringing thus forth that famous *Councel* of *Nice*, where were gathered moſt of the grave and godly miniſters in that time, through all the churches both in the eaſtern and weſtern parts: who had then ſpecial advantage for a more publick teſtimony, and ſtrengthning of the church thereby, in that greateſt foundation truth of the God-head of Chriſt. 3. Thus did the Lord convincingly witneſs, though it was in another form by this trial, than what was formerly from *Heathens*, how one and the ſame ſpirit acted in both; ſo as the cruelty and violence of this party of the *Arians* againſt the orthodox chriſtians, both in *Egypt*, and amongſt the *Vandals* in *Africk*; was almoſt the ſame length, where they could have advantage, of the old adverſary the *Heathens*. 4. It is known how marvelouſly the Lord did then own and follow with a bleſſing the witneſs of a few under this trial, in contending for the truth, to the churches being kept alive, ſuch as *Athanaſius*; when that impetuous torrent of apoſtacy ſeemed to over-run all, and was matter of aſtoniſhment to ſee in how ſhort a time, much of the chriſtian was turned *Arian*; but the greater the conflict was, the more diſcernibly might the truth's overcoming be ſeen, which muſt ſtill out-live falſhood; yea, the Lord's calling forth ſome witneſſes then, with much of his preſence and ſpirit to ſtand and withſtand at ſuch a time, was not more obvious than thoſe extraordinary providences of their preſervation when oft like to be ſwallowed up by the adverſary, as hiſtories of that time give a peculiar account of in the life of *Athanaſius*.

Sect. 4. That amazing ſtroke of judgment on *Arius* himſelf the firſt leader of this party, is atteſted by the concurrence of all our churches records, with this account thereof, 'that being called before *Conſtantine*, who was 'then at *Conſtantinople*, to retract his former tenets, and ſubſcribe to the 'Council of *Nice*, he not only yeilded thereto, but with an oath declared his 'believing of what he ſubſcribed whilſt in the very time he had another paper 'of his own with him, in which he had written and ſubſcribed his own te'nets; but coming forth to the city in much pomp with many of his fol'lowers, who then waited on him, as he came near *Conſtantines*'s market, 'which was about the middle of the city, where ſtood a pillar of red marble,

'a ſudden horror fell upon his conſcience upon what he had done, and withal 'feeling a tendency to ſome flux, was enforced to get into a common *jacks* 'near that place, where he was taken with a faintneſs, and together with 'his excrements voided his *guts*: a great ſtream of blood following, the ſlender 'and ſmall *bowels* not only falling out, but *blood*, together with the *ſpleen* 'and *liver*, ſo as he there preſently died in this dreadful manner', and thoſe *jacks* do ſome of the writers of the time relate were ſtill to be ſeen then, behind *Conſtantines*'s market in the pork-ſhambles; and how paſſengers in their going by, did uſe to point at this place in remembrance of the miſerable end of that wretched man: The report whereof was not only ſpread through the whole city, but quickly through much of the world, cauſing much terror and amazement on his confederates that followed him. The Emperor by this means cleaved more to the *Nicene* creed, ſaying it was now viſibly ratified by ſuch an extraordinary teſtimony of God thereto, and much rejoiced in it. Thus *Socrates* ſets it particularly down with moſt of our church-writers. And is a paſſage (though at this diſtance of time) ſhould be ſtill affecting and remarkable when ſo evident. 1. How it was in the open view, and moſt conſpicuous then city in the earth, in ſuch manner as could admit no poſſible concealment, or contradicting thereto by his followers, ſo that thus in the providence of God the report thereof might go as far as the contagion had ſpread. 2. Its following immediately on ſome horror of conſcience, and though he was not his own executioner as *Judas*, yet hath it a moſt viſible reſemblance to that ſtroke of judgment, *Acts* i. 18. where by the Holy Ghoſt it is ſhewed that he falling headlong burſt aſunder and his bowels guſhed out, the one, who under ſimulate friendſhip had betrayed the Son of God, the other expreſly denying him, though with ſome pretended reſpects alſo. 3. What befell *Georgius the Arian*, that violent promoter of this way at *Alexandria*, is likewiſe evident from the records of that time, 'who after ſuch cruelties 'exerciſed on the chriſtian church there, for purſuing that intereſt, being 'then the *Emperor's* depute in that place, was pulled out of the church by 'the *Gentiles* upon a tumult they made, tied to a Camel, and thus pulled in 'pieces, and his body burnt to aſhes; and *Valens* the *Arian Emperor*, a 'cruel perſecutor of the orthodox (for thoſe cruelties by this adverſary then 'ſeemed to exceed the *Heathens*) was in battle againſt the *Goths* wounded, 'and being carried to an houſe near by, it was ſet on fire by the enemy, where 'he miſerably periſhed, who had but a little before put ninety eight miniſters 'in a ſhip, and burnt them together for their owning the truth againſt *Arianiſm*, as *Socrates* who wrote near that age holds forth, *lib.* iv. *cap.* 45.

SECT. 5. That ſharp ſtorm though ſhort, in thoſe times upon the whole chriſtian church under *Julian* the *Apoſtate*, ſeemed not more ſtrange and ſurpriſing than the convincing neceſſity thereof, and the Lord's tender reſpects for his people might be clear, for getting thus ſome new ſtrength and luſtre after ſuch withering, and being almoſt ſpent in the vitals of chriſtianity, by that outward peace under *Conſtantine* and *Conſtantius*, as from the cleareſt account given of that time, we may ſee, 1. What tendency to ſtrengthen more than ſhake the faith of the ſaints, this ſharp ſtorm of perſecution then had. 2. In that diſcernible advantage, which followed to unite further thoſe amongſt themſelves with the more warmings of that ancient love that was wont to be amongſt them, which through the abounding iniquity of thoſe times of peace had become more cold. 3. In bringing forth a new teſtimony to the truth of the goſpel, and of the divinity of Chriſt, even amidſt thoſe remarkable eſſays which had been made by the *Arians* to darken the ſame, we have recorded then amongſt other inſtances that of *Marcus Arethuſus*, who being

being commanded to build one of the idol temples he had thrown down, and on his refusal prest to give but for that end some very small thing, to put some dash thus on the profession of Jesus Christ, he chearfully underwent the greatest of torments, rather than to give but one obolum or farthing for such an end. 4. It was here also, that conspicuous victory our blessed Redeemer had over this adversary, was brought forth in the view of the world, when in that height of contempt against the Son of God, whilst he was deadly wounded in battle against the *Persians*, he was made to fall by a *Pagan* adversary, whose greatest aim had been to set up *Paganism* in his time, and taking his blood which then gushed out of the wound in his hand, threw it up in the air with these words *Vicisti ô Galilæe*, as is shewed by *Socrates*, *lib.* iii. *c.* 18. *Sozom.* viii. *c.* 2. *Theod. l.* iii. *c.* 25.

Sect. 6. That stupendious passage is transmitted to us by clearest evidence from those times, of an immediate appearance from heaven against *Julian*'s attempt to rebuild the *Temple* at *Jerusalem*, which in opposition to the christian church, he then vigorously set on foot, and for this end did so far comply with the *Jews*, as by an edict he gave warrant for their setting about that work, and to have their sacrifices there as in former times; yea, that the charge and expence of the building should be answered out of the publick treasure, as *Sozomen lib.* v. *c.* 21. *Socrat. lib.* iii. *c.* 17. do at length relate. But I rather here set down the account by *Ammianus Marcellinus*, a known heathen writer in his own words, that *Julian* the *Emperor having enjoined the re-edifying of the Jewish Temple; and ordering all the expence thereof from his own treasure, was from heaven enforced to stop, and give this over, the workers who then were setting it on foot being struck with flames of fire, breaking up from the foundation, as they neither could nor durst more adventure upon it.* *Ammian Marc. lib.* xxiii. *Sozomen* doth further add, 'that beside those flames, the very earth did cast forth great stones, by 'which many of the workmen were destroyed. The *Jews* in great multitudes looking on with astonishment and confusion of spirit, at such a sight: 'So as *Julian* upon the certain account he had thereof, was struck with some 'fear,' so as he fully gave over the attempt, and adds, 'if any will but go 'to *Jerusalem*, they may see the visible marks of this truth upon that place: 'of this passage (saith *Sozomen*) we are all witnesses, for it was not in former times, but in this very present age it fell out.' And it is known how about the very same time fire came down from heaven, and destroyed the temple of *Apollo* and *Daphne*, and beat the images of *Apollo* in pieces, like to the smallest powder, as *Theodore* shews, *lib.* iii. *c.* 9. 10.

Sect. 7. 'This memorable passage doth *Ruffinus* in his church-history 'set down near to that time, of a heathen *Philosopher* in a publick dispute 'at the town of *Nice* with some christians there, who had a singular advantage 'in arguing and for subtile evading the strength of those arguments by which 'he most was strained, until one in the meeting, an elder then of the church, 'as the history shews, being much stirred in spirit therewith, craved liberty 'from the meeting to reason a little with this proud disputant, and though 'his truth and seriousness in the way of the Lord was convincingly known, 'though with a very small measure of gifts and human learning, it 'put his friends then to fear, lest the christian cause might be prejudged in 'so publick an appearance, by his weakness, but he still pressing the same 'and directing himself to the adversary begun thus.' *In the name of Jesus Christ, I require you to hear the truth; there is but one God who made the heavens and earth, and hath formed man of the dust thereof, with a living and immortal soul, who by his word and power accompanying the same did bring*

bring forth this whole creation, and ſanctifies us by his ſpirit, and he who is the word, whom we own to be the Son of God, taking compaſſion on fallen man hath become man; was born of a Virgin, and by his ſufferings and death delivered us from an eternal death, and by his reſurrection made ſure eternal life, whom we certainly look for again to be the judge of the world! Believeſt thou this O Philoſopher: To which, he being ſtruck with a viſible conſternation, under the awe and authority of the truth, then in ſuch ſimplicity delivered, was enforced to anſwer, 'that he confeſſed the ſame, and that it was indeed true'. To whom that holy man did then ſpeak. *If you believe and confeſs the truth of the goſpel, ariſe and follow me in unto the choire of the church, that you may receive the badge and cognizance of this faith by baptiſm,* which he did, and turning himſelf to thoſe of his own party then preſent, ſaid, *Whilſt I had to do with words and the reaſonings of men I could oppoſe words thereunto, but now when I find a power, I cannot reſiſt following the ſame, I could ſtand out no longer, but find that man cannot oppoſe himſelf to God. Ruff. Hiſt. Eccleſ. lib.* ii. *c.* 3. A paſſage upon ſuch a publick account could not eaſily then by this ancient writer have been publiſhed to the world, and the place where it was ſo particularly circumſtantiate, without acceſs to the adverſaries of that time to have repell'd the ſame, if any falſhood therein could have been evinced; and indeed a convincing paſſage for the world to know, that it was not by the greateſt advantage of gifts or human learning the intereſt of the goſpel was promoted, but that the ſpirit of the Lord, with the meaneſt inſtrument, gains more to the church, than the furtheſt of human eloquence.

SECT. 8. It is a grave and weighty paſſage alſo, though in ſome ages after, which anſwers well to what goes before, ſet down by *Matthias Pariſienſis* in his hiſtory, of one *Simon Shurrina* doctor of greateſt note at *Paris* about the twelfth century, one of ſingular judgment and learning, and for ſharpneſs of wit accounted then beyond moſt of the time, in clearing the moſt dark and difficult caſes, ſo as he was throng'd beyond all the maſters of the Univerſity with a great reſort to his leſſon. 'One day when he had moſt 'ſubtily diſputed, and with moſt profound and ſtrong argumeuts handled 'that ſubject of the perſons of the *Trinity*, but not having acceſs through 'time to follow forth what he intended, ſhewed to the auditory that the next 'day he was further to treat thereon, upon which the report going, occaſion-'ed an extraordinary confluence of hearers, who were indeed aſtoniſhed with 'his diſcourſe, and the great account he then gave of extraordinary parts, ſo 'upon the cloſe he was preſt by divers there preſent that his diſcourſe then 'might be put in writ, and publiſhed to the world, wherewith he was ſo 'puft up, as in the dreadful manner of blaſphemous inſolence he brake forth 'thus, *O Jeſus Jeſus* (though this in a contemptible manner was expreſt) 'how much have I in this queſtion confirmed and exalted thy laws: but if I 'pleaſe to oppoſe my ſelf thereunto, I know how with ſtronger arguments 'as much to weaken and depreſs the ſame, which no ſooner ſpoken than he 'was preſently ſtruck dumb, that for the time he could ſpeak no more, and 'not only thus, but became a moſt notour idiot, ſo as he could neither read 'nor know what was ſpoken to him in any rational way, and became as pub-'lick an object of deriſion, as he had before been almoſt of mens adoration.' This is at length by that *hiſtorian* ſet down, *Matth. Par. Chron.* 121. *p.* 198. with theſe two convincing remarks alſo which are there held forth. 1. That at this time ſchool-theology wholly was turned to be a matter of wit, and ſubtil diſputation for oſtentation, but not to edify, whilſt by ſuch a ſtupendious providence, and in ſo publick a place the Lord put ſuch a mark on one who

was of greateſt repute then in that way. The 2d. doth ſhew ſome effects it had upon many ſcholars in that age, not only to enforce a conviction of the truth of the chriſtian religion, but to ſuppreſs the arrogance and inſolent boaſtings which in many then was too diſcernible, as if the doctrine of the ſcripture ſtood or fell by their reaſonings.

SECT. 9. 'We may ſee a moſt convincing appearance, of the Lord record-
'ed by our *eccleſiaſtick* writers, for *Theodoſius* that good *Emperor*, who af-
'ter *Julian*, was given as a bleſſing then to the church, how in his war againſt
'the tyrant *Eugenius*, with whom *Arbogaſtus* the chief leader of his forces,
'had conſpired againſt *Valentinian* the ſecond, and cauſed ſtrangle him in his
'bed; being ſore ſtraitned in fight, and like to ſuccumb, did then before his
'army turn himſelf to God by prayer, for ſome evidence of his preſent help;
'whereupon ſuch a mighty tempeſt of wind was ſent, and blew ſo vehement-
'ly in the face of *Eugenius*'s army, as their darts were ranverſed, and turned
'back by the violence of the wind, in their own faces, and the enemies broke,
'and *Eugenius* being hardly purſued fled into the *Emperor* himſelf, falling
'down on his knees for relief, but ſuch was the hot and eager purſuit of
'the ſoldiers, as he was inſtantly killed, and *Arbogaſtus* ſlew himſelf'. This
'*Socrates* ſets down *lib.* v. *c.* 23. of which miraculous appearance of the
'Lord; the Poet *Claudian* hath theſe verſes.

O nimium dilecte Deo! cui fundit ab antris
Æolus armatas acies, cui militat æther
Et conjurati veniunt ad claſſica venti.

In which paſſage we may ſee, what remarkable difference, by the immediate appearance of God, for confirming his truth, was made obvious to the world, betwixt a *Theodoſius* and a *Julian*.

SECT. 10. We ſee in this time of the church's renewed calm and peace, after *Julian*'s being taken out of the way, thoſe ſore inteſtine troubles and conflicts which then brake up; yea, the depths of Satan in his working by a ſpirit of error ſome further length than before, not only by the *Arian* party, in denying the Deity of the bleſſed Lord, but by thoſe dreadful tenets of *Pelagianiſm*, which then began to appear in oppoſing his grace, merit and ſatisfaction, and a poiſon that did more ſubtilty diffuſe it ſelf through the vital parts of the church: We may convincingly ſee alſo that ſpecial tender care of the churches head over her, and for ſecuring his truth in ſuch cloudy times. 1. By raiſing up then thoſe excellent lights with gifts and endowments ſuitable to the ſervice of the time, for contending againſt thoſe adverſaries, ſuch as *Auguſtine*, *Hierome*, *Baſilius Magnus*, *Proſper*, and *Gregory Nazianzen*; as we may ſee clear from our church hiſtories, yea, whilſt in after ages this horrid poiſon of *Pelagianiſm* was continued, we find a *Bradwardine* that great light then raiſed up. 2. It was alſo obvious for the church's confirming, how this ſad declining from the truth and corruption in doctrine, and a declining in the practice and power thereof, did not only break up, but had their growth and advance together, ſo as each ſerious obſerver might ſee whence thoſe errors had their true riſe and ſtrength. 3. But the truth then had that advantage, that the ſpirit of error breaking thus up and making ſuch formidable approaches, was not more diſcernible than its being expreſly foretold by the Holy Ghoſt in the word, that ſuch a departing from the faith, and giving head to ſeducing ſpirits was to be looked for in thoſe times 1 *Tim.* iv. 1. And ſuch a trial was to follow the church under the *New Teſtament*, of grievous wolves entering who ſhould not ſpare the flock, yea,

come

come that length in falling off from the truth as to deny the Lord that bought them.

SECT. 11. It is moſt remarkble and confirming, what we ſee in the ſtate of the *Jews* after their diſperſion, now in the times of the goſpel, how this people would not embrace the true *Meſſias Jeſus Chriſt*, did ſo eaſily follow Impoſtors, and thoſe who rejected the Meſſias in his bleſſed offer to ſave, was in judgment after, yea, often delivered over to embrace a counterfeit Meſſias for their deſtruction, ſo as from ſome of their own writers, yea, the moſt famous hiſtories of the church in former times, it is moſt evident, the greateſt ſtrokes have followed that people ſince the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* and the temple, have been this way which in theſe inſtances we may ſee. 1. Under *Adrian*'s reign, whilſt they could not evite the conviction, that the time of the *Meſſias* coming, if it was not paſt, could not but be inſtantly near, ſo as upon the leaſt falſe appearance they were prone to be ſtirred; we find that egregious impoſtor embraced by them, whom they called *Bar Cosbah* from that veneration they had then to him, and that this was the ſtar ſhould ariſe from *Jacob*, *Numb.* xxiv. 14. and whom they followed to their own ruin in greateſt multitudes, ſo as it is almoſt incredible the account, that both our ancient and modern writers give of that ſlaughter which thereon followed by the *Romans*, to have been no leſs than many millions of that deplorably wretched people, yea, how the blood of the ſlain was ſo great, as run like rivers in thoſe places, *Juſt. Mart. Euſeb.* iv. *cap.* 6. *Buxtorf. Syn. Jud. cap.* 36. *Carion Lib.* iii. *Chronic.* 2. 'We have that memorable paſſage to witneſs 'this alſo, of their *Moſes Cretenſis*, one who appeared amongſt them about 'the third century, giving out that he was ſent to take them through the 'ſea to their own land, as of old *Iſrael* was under *Moſes*'s leading, and for 'a year together made it his work through the towns of that iſland of *Crete*, 'where he moſt appeared, to perſuade them hereof, and that they ſhould 'quit their eſtate and poſſeſſions to follow him, giving greateſt aſſurances 'that they ſhould be carryed ſafe and without wetting the ſole of their foot 'through the ſea, for which he ſet them a day to accompliſh this, where-'upon that poor people, eager and confident herein, came with their wives 'and children in great multitudes to a rock hanging above the ſea, whom he 'there exhorted to go forward, and that without fear they might forthwith 'throw themſelves in the ſea; which deluſion they were under, was ſo ſtrong, 'as divers leaped down, and were inſtantly ſwallowed up, and periſhed in 'that depth. Whereupon the multitude ſeeing he was but an impoſtor, 'turned themſelves in rage to look for this their leader, but he was gone, 'having inſtantly diſappeared, and was found to be the Devil in human ſhape, as *Socrat. Lib.* vii. *cap.* 37. with other greateſt writers relate. 3. It is known that paſſage of *David, El David*, whom the *Jews* in *Perſia* and thoſe adjacent places then followed as their Meſſias in the twelfth century, which their own writers do not in the leaſt deny, and that ſtrong perſwaſion they had thereof, as made them gather every where and flock with him; yea, to oppoſe themſelves to the *Perſian* power, from the confidence they had in this their deliverer, till they were broken and ſcattered, this impoſtor taken and his head ſtruck off by the *King of Perſia*'s order, and the *Jews* at laſt forced to redeem their own lives with a great ſum of money.

SECT. 12. We may ſee of what ſhort continuance ſome of the choiceſt *Emperors*, for piety and zeal in owning the truth then were, thus the Lord diſpoſing as more congruous to the church's condition under the *New Teſtament*, that their favourable blinks and breathings ſhould be of a ſhort time, as is evident in that inſtance of *Jovinian*, that excellent man, who was next after

Julian, yet lived not out eight months; *Marcian* the *Emperor*, who reigned not fully seven years, but left behind him great grief, to the hearts of all the godly in that time, that so choice a prince had so short a reign: Likewise *Valentinian* the first, who succeeded *Jovinianus*, whose reign though somewhat longer than those, was but thirteen years, in whom was accomplished remarkably that truth, that such as honour God he will honour, yea, even in this life, *Valentinian* having for Christ's sake lost his Office in *Julian*'s court, and being degraded from any honour there, who a little after was advanced to the Empire.

Sect. 13. In those sad declining times from the truth of the gospel, and that dark night of antichristianism entering upon the church, we may see the special providence of the Lord in behalf of the scriptures, that the whole *Canon* of both the *Old* and *New Testament* had been so publickly owned and received by all parties, both in the eastern and western churches, with that universal dispersing of copies, even from the first times through all those following ages, and in the most remote places of the earth, as put it beyond possible reach for depraving or rejecting the authority thereof, yea, how in the sixth century by the *Councel* of *Teledo*, the revelation of *John* was so solemnly declared to be Canonick scripture, and that none should dare to question this; that as the *Jews* have been forced by the blest disposal of God to own their assent and subjecting to these records of the *Old Testament*, by which they are so convincingly judged: Thus also we may see by the no less marvelous providence of God, the whole of the *New Testament* kept and owned by the *Romish church*, yea, under an invincible necessity, for some profest veneration thereto, by which Antichrist is so clearly revealed and made known, and the sure founding of the Protestant faith, with the greatest fulness of evidence made clear, as they are now forced to gnaw their tongue with pain, to see by the clear shining of this light their kingdom so visibly darkned; which when they could not but see, even with the first revealing of that man of sin, and when Popery had got to the throne; there was then no help left, but to shut up these fountains from the world's ordinary converse therewith. 1. By reason of the independency of the *Greek* churches then upon their power, where the christian faith was still owned and adhered to with some more purity, and thus the preserving of the scripture, and the whole of the *New Testament* beyond their possible reach to get corrupted. 2. That still in those darkest times, whilst the *Romish* interest was at its greatest height, the most knowing and learned who were at the greatest advantage to obviate any such design, and had most familiar converse with the scripture, may be clearly seen, were such as kept furthest from the corruptions of the *Romish* church, and appeared against the same. 3. This also, (though in judgment to them) was remarkably subservient to this end, that corrupt application, which their own greatest writers and Schoolmen made of the scripture, for accommodating it to their interest and design, having established the conclusion before the premises, their greatest work then was to have the written word suited to their way, and to oppose the truth against it self; which yet by a supreme over-ruling hand tended to their publick owning of the text and the letter of the word, even by those false glosses they put upon it.

Sect. 14. It is known from the gravest histories of those times, what amazing signs and prodigies in a more extraordinary and unusual way than had ever formerly been, did then give forewarning to the world of this fatal change, and the bringing forth of that greatest monster of *Antichristianism*, to be near; of which we find the primitive times have had such dread, as put many to pray *Pro mora, finis*, upon that sad mistake, that they judged the

the coming of Antichriſt ſhould be near to the cloſe of time, becauſe they knew his final deſtruction was to be by the brightneſs of the ſecond coming of Chriſt, whilſt it might have been as obvious, that the begun working and breaking up of this myſtery, had reſpect to the firſt ages of the chriſtian church. *Aventin* ſhews how in *Conſtantine*'s time, when outward proſperity began to ſmile, and great revenues were ſettled on church-men, how ſuch a voice was heard from heaven moſt audidibly at *Rome*, *Hodie effuſum eſt venenum in Eccleſiam. To day is the Church poiſon'd. Avent. lib.* v. *Sigebert. in Chron.* which *Platina* is forced alſo to confeſs, yea moſt writers do all give that account, how from the eight centry for ſeveral ages after, what extraordinary and amazing prodigies then were ſeen, as did aſtoniſh and affright the minds of moſt; the heavens ſeen many times to burn; the ſun and moon to looſe their light, the ſtars to fall from heaven to the earth, moſt ſtrange and monſtrous births, overſpreading of many places with ſuch ſwarms of locuſts, and thoſe of an extraordinary form, as deſtroyed moſt of the ground, great inundations, as *Aventine*, *Nauclerus*, yea *Baronius* in his centuries with moſt hiſtories then do all hold forth: ſo as the moſt diſcerning men in thoſe ages looked forth and ſaw the empire of Antichriſt to be certainly beginning, and ſome remarkable work of judgment then bringing forth on the world.

Sect. 15. Seeing it is undeniable, the greateſt diſcovery that ever came to men, is that of the *Goſpel*, and of redemption by Jeſus Chriſt revealed to us there, a myſtery hid and ſhut up for ſo many ages from moſt of the world, and that it is ſo clear alſo the greateſt contempt of the holy God, that men could witneſs, is the diſpiſing of ſo ineſtimable an offer of this great ſalvation, can it be ſtrange, that ſuch a delivering up of mens reaſon and judgment, even to ſuch a height of ſtrong deluſion, as *Antichriſtian Popery* is, ſhould follow thereon, which is certainly one of the greateſt and moſt ſtupendious ſtrokes from the Lord, that ever was inflicted. A myſtery, which after much hid working under the ground for ſeveral ages, did at laſt ripen to its full height, and diſcovery thereof, about the year 607, whilſt that vile monſter *Phocas* did then ſway the *empire*. This was the ſeaſon, when the papal power got at laſt to the throne, and that *Boniface the third* by a particular grant from *Phocas the Emperor*, took to himſelf that title of *Univerſal Biſhop* and *Head of the church*: about which theſe remarks may be convincing from the hiſtories of that time. 1. That with a viſible decay and deciining of chriſtianity both in the power, and purity thereof, did the revealing of the *Man of ſin* find ſo fit and opportune a ſeaſon for this: for it was then the going down of the ſun, the ſhadow's waxing great, with a thick and palpable darkneſs every where overſpreading, ſo as it might be ſeen, the outer court of the viſible church was given to the *Gentiles*; and chriſtianity almoſt loſt, as to any publick appearance thereof. 2. It is remarkable what then followed, as one of the firſt effects of that new *empire* and *univerſal head-ſhip* over the *church*, that it was to bring *Chriſtianity* and *Paganiſm* in a conformity to other, and caſt that old *Idolatry* of of *heatheniſh Rome* into a new mould by a publick conſecration of the *Roman Pantheon*, that temple which they had for *all their gods*, to be for *all ſaints*, as *Platina* himſelf with other *popiſh* writers holds forth, and then did ordain that feaſt of *all ſaints*, which is *all Hallowes*, to be kept through the whole church. This was the firſt application we find of that *Univerſal ſupremacy* by the *Romiſh church*, with a viſible falling from the worſhip of the living God to ſuch avowed idolatry. 3. What ſad and dreadful times thoſe then were to live in, this followed on the chriſtian world; we find the greateſt of their own writers with ſuch horror and amaze-

ment ſeized, that they knew not how to expreſs it: yea but let any read the records of thoſe times even of their own writers, ſuch as *Baronius* in his *Annals*, *Platina*, *Benno*, &c. for ſeveral ages that followed, and it is ſure, they muſt read alſo a continued *Tragedy* of the ſtate of the chriſtian world; of blood, tyranny, oppreſſion and falſehood, which brake looſe thereupon; yea a ſlavery more than *Turkiſh* impoſed both on the conſcience, and civil intereſts of men, by this pretended *Popiſh Supremacy*. 4. It is ſtrange to read what impreſſion was then upon many of the *Romiſh church*, and ſuch as were moſt knowing in thoſe times, that certainly *Antichriſt* was come: Though of all ſtrokes from the Lord, that of judicial blindneſs may ſeem moſt ſtrange, yet many could not get this hid, how ſuch publick intruſion into the *imperial power*, and exalting themſelves above Kings and Emperors, did ſo convincingly anſwer to what was foretold of the man of ſin, and his being revealed; as *Azorius* the *Jeſuite*, *Part* 2. *lib.* iv. *cap.* xx. ſheweth, this was ſo ordinary to the *Romiſh church*, as their *Popes* took upon them to diſpoſe of *Kingdoms* no leſs, than of *Biſhopricks*. 5. Thus alſo in the providence of the Lord was that *Romiſh hierarchy*, which had ſo far ſubjected the world under it, made manifeſt, that at one time this monſtrous body might be ſeen with a treeple head, as well as with a treeple crown, and three *Popes* contending to the utmoſt, with one another by excommunication and the temporal ſword, ſuch as *Benedict*, *Sylveſter* and *Gregory*, whom *Baronius* calls a three headed beaſt, ariſing from the gates of hell, yea whom *Platina* calls three wicked monſters. Nor hath after ages been a ſtranger to this, how two *Popes* at once have ſat on that throne, and thus what a flame the poor blind antichriſtian world was put into, and rent in their adhering to the one ſide or other.

Sect. 16. It was no caſual ſtumble, but a convincing providence may be ſeen therein, that in the year 854. and in a time, when moſt did not regard the word, or know the judgment they were under by the ſcripture light, there ſhould be ſuch a viſible emblem then of the *Romiſh ſtate*, in a Women Pope a moſt vile whore getting up to *that throne*, to head their church, as *Peter's ſucceſſor*. This for matter of fact, their own writers, yea ſuch as depended moſt on the *Pope*, do expreſly confeſs, with ſuch particular circumſtances, as ſhew there could be no poſſible concealing thereof, though it be grievous to this day their reflecting on it, as 1. Her bringing forth a child, and dying in the birth, whilſt ſhe went in proceſſion to the *Laterane*, betwixt the *Thearre* and St. *Clements*, in a publick ſtreet, as a witneſs againſt this adverſary; which the Lord would not ſuffer to be hid, but to be ſet forth to the open view of the world, to know what a mother church is, and what are her children; yea with what ſecurity they lean their faith on the deciſion of ſuch a judge. 2. It is known their keeping off this ſtreet, and diſhaunting it in their proceſſions ſince. I know *Platina*, in the relation of this ſhews that it was generally received to be true, without being more poſitive, but *Marianus Scotus*, *Petrarch in Chronic.* with other ancient writers of greateſt repute in the *Romiſh* church, do with the furtheſt of evidence atteſt this, and are cited herein by moſt of our modern hiſtories.

Sect. 17. It is ſo manifeſt, as there needs no particular inſtances but a view of the whole *Series* of thoſe times, to ſee what a tragick *Theatre* moſt of *Europe* then became, and for ſeveral ages continued, of blood, troubles, and inteſtine broils, oppreſſion by church-men, diſpoſſeſſing princes of their temporality by a pretended ſpiritual power, both in the empire, and in all places, where the *Romiſh hierarchy* did ſtretch it ſelf; yea that vaſt expence of blood and treaſure by the contrivance of the *popiſh* party, which then followed that long continued war to regain the holy land, whilſt under that cover

cover their work lay to gain a further intereſt upon the power of princes and great men, and for weakening the ſtrength of *Europe*. O what a viſible plague was this on the antichriſtian world, whilſt their eyes were ſo ſhut, as they could not ſee it.

SECT. 18. This ſpecial providence of the Lord for his truth in thoſe times, may be moſt obſervable, that this great adverſary of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhould be judged not only by the ſcripture and its light, and thoſe convincing providences againſt them, but by themſelves alſo, and out of their own mouth have ſo convincing a teſtimony that way, as from thoſe writers of greateſt weight amongſt them, is clear; to ſhew that dominion which the holy God hath over mens conſcience, as they find an accuſer within their own breaſt, whoſe ſentence and judgment they cannot poſſibly decline, but doth exerciſe its power on them, even whilſt it is againſt them: For it is evident, what account, theſe known friends to the *Popiſh* intereſt, ſuch as *Benno* the *Cardinal*, *Lutebrand*, *Platina*, *Bernard*, yea *Baronius* himſelf gives of the *Romiſh church* and its *hierarchy*, as might almoſt juſtify paganiſm conſidered therewith, and enforce the world to ſee, that either the ſcripture is not the word of God, or the *Romiſh* church hath made viſiblea poſtacy from the chriſtian faith, and turned antichriſtian; ſome particular inſtances for this, I ſhall only offer. 1. Of *Gregory the great* in his epiſtles to *Mauritius* the *Emperor*, what expreſs witneſs he there bears againſt any claim to be univerſal biſhop, whereunto *John* the *Patriarch* of *Conſtantinople* ſeemed then to aſpire, *telling him that by owning ſuch a ſtile, it might be known the time of Antichriſt was at hand, in this imitating* Lucifer, *who not ſatisfied with what he poſſeſt in common, with the whole of the angels, would needs ſeek after a ſingularity above the reſt, and in his writing to this* John *ſays, what will thou anſwer to* Chriſt *the true head of the univerſal church, in that day of judgment, ſeeing that by this name of univerſal, thou ſeek'ſt to enthral the members of his body unto thy ſelf; and again in his writing to the Emperor thereanent, hath theſe words. Be it far that your time ſhould be thus defiled with the exaltation of one man, conſider that antichriſt ſhall call himſelf God, and if ye look to the quality of that word,* univerſal, *it conſiſteth only of two words, but if you regard the weight of iniquity therein, it is an univerſal enemy; wherefore I ſpeak confidently, that whoſoever calleth himſelf, or deſireth, to be called an* Univerſal Biſhop, *is in the elation of his mind the forerunner of Antichriſt.* This is the teſtimony of that *Gregory*, who amongſt the greateſt of their ſaints is canonized, and is ſet down in his own epiſtles, *Lib.* iv. *Epiſt.* 28. and 54. *yea*, is inſerted in the *Decretals of the Canon-law* which *Gregory* XIII. knew not how to redreſs, when he found their loſs thereby. 2. We have this account by *Melchior Canus*, a known *popiſh* writer, anent their *Legends*, that with leſs integrity and faithfulneſs were they written, than the lives of the heathen were writ by their authors, and adds, *Dolenter hoc dico multò a Laertio ſeverius vitas philoſophorum ſcriptas eſſe, quam à chriſtianis vitas chriſtianorum.* Canus *lib.* xi. *cap.* vi. *pag.* 533. and it is known what *Marſilius Patavinus* is enforced to confeſs in his book called *Defenſor pacis*, that the Clergy of *Rome* was a den of thieves, it leadeth unto eternal death; and how that famous learned man, *Franciſcus Petrarcha* writing in the year 1350. *Epiſt.* 19. Thus ſpeaks to one of his friends. *Let no evil entangle thee, that thou ſhouldeſt addreſs thy ſelf again to thoſe princes of darkneſs, to what purpoſe wouldeſt thou go thither* (*meaning of* Rome) *that thou might ſee good men born down, and evil men advanced, eagles creeping, and aſſes flying, wolves to be free, and Lambs to be in bonds, finally Chriſt to be baniſht, and Beelzebub to be judge:* but ſuch inſtances

are ſo numerous, beſides ſuch as *Gerſhom* and *Clemangius*, who wrote that book *De corrupto ſtatu Eccleſiæ*, as one needs but look through many of the known popiſh writers, to have a clear witneſs againſt popery.

Sect. 19. We ſee in thoſe dark times, when men grew weary of the truth, and were ſo univerſally carried off from the ſimplicity of the goſpel, to fabulous traditions of the extraordinary perfection of ſome of their ſaints, and after miracles and viſions, how diſcernibly this became their plague and judgment, no leſs than it was their choice, yea, to what a length, as ever was known in any time, Satan was then let looſe, and had greateſt liberty with ſuch a darkning of the air, by that ſmoke which aroſe from the bottomleſs pit, as men ſeemed to have wholly loſt their way, whilſt they chooſed another guide than the ſcripture, the heavens ſo darkned, that they ſought another entry there than by the blood of the everlaſting covenant, yea, thought it enough to ſecure them from going down to the pit, to have the Pope's pardon, and to be about outward penances; yet even then was the truth thus remarkably confirmed in the bleſt providence of the Lord, that in thoſe moſt ſtrange and extraordinary things they boaſted of, all might ſee, their being ſuited to confirm ſuch tenets of the *Romiſh* doctrine, which could not poſſibly abide the teſt of the ſcripture or its light, nor admit another ſeal of ratification but from the Devil, as the hiſtories of thoſe times, and their own legends ſo clearly ſhew, by what means purgatory, the maſs, praying for the dead, the condignity of works, the uſe of images, the adoration of the *Virgin Mary*, &c. firſt got credit amongſt them, by having that viſible ſeal of ſigns, and lying wonders appended thereto, by which now in the event it is ſo diſcernible, how thoſe may be called the doctrines of Devils, as they are by the ſpirit of God termed, 2 *Tim.* iv. 1. not only as they tend to promote his intereſt and kingdom; but ſuch wherein his power is no leſs vigorouſly put forth, for getting credit thereto, than it was formerly for *Paganiſm*, as in innumerable inſtances from their own writers may be clear.

Sect. 20. Whilſt thus the Devil was aloft, and ſo viſibly let looſe in this great darkneſs of *Antichriſtianiſm*, we may ſee the Lord's marvelous appearing for his latent church then in ſackcloth, for her being kept alive and fed in ſuch times, which was no falſe or pretended *miracle*, but one of the greateſt confirmations of the truth of Jeſus Chriſt, given under the *New Teſtament*: whilſt it is ſo clear, no human relief or encouragement was then under their view, her trials more ſearching and ſore, than in the firſt times of the goſpel from the *Heathens*, and their adverſaries ſuch, for whom moſt of the chriſtian world ſeemed to own a profeſt veneration; no poſſible acceſs then to embark with ſuch an afflicted and deſpiſed party, as the true worſhippers of God in thoſe times were, but at the rate of being a prey to the worlds cruelty, and to make ſhipwreck of both credit and comfort in their outward ſtate, and whilſt ſuch as had oppoſed the truth formerly, as the *Arians*, *Neſtorians*, &c. as well as the preſent adverſary, with whom they now were enforced to conflict, gained what ground they had by greateſt inſinuations on the civil power, and could not endure that teſt of ſuffering for their way, yea, no intereſt or advantage from this earth had thoſe bleſt witneſſes, whoſe cloſe adhering to the truth in that long and dark night of Antichriſt's reign, is even by the confeſſion of their adverſaries tranſmitted with honour, and a ſweet and odoriferious ſcent to this day. About whom theſe marvelous providences of the Lord for their feeding and ſupport, was then moſt convincingly evident, 1. That they had the *Old* and *New Teſtament* tranſlated in their own vulgar tongue, which as *Reinerus* a popiſh writer, who wrote about the *twelfth century*, ſhews, they taught and learned ſo well, that he hath himſelf ſeen a country-

country-clown recite *Job* word by word, and ſeveral others who could perfectly deliver the whole *New Teſtament*, having then ſuch familiar converſe therewith, thus *Rein. de Valdenſibus:* O how wonderful a teacher is the ſpirit of God by the word, in times when all other helps fail; this alſo was a remarkable providence for a more ſafe preſerving of the copies of the ſcripture in ſuch dark times, from any poſſible acceſs to get them corrupted. 2. They wanted not then a continued ſucceſſion of miniſters amongſt them, who had no dependance on the *Romiſh* church, with the exerciſe of church government, to which in greateſt ſingleneſs and integrity they did ſubmit, and this ſucceſſion of miniſters ſtill kept up, until that bleſſed raiſing of the church after *Luther* and *Zuinglius* appeared, as both *Sleidan* and *Thuan* do fully clear, and how two of thoſe were then ſent to the *German* churches, to witneſs their doctrine was one and the ſame with theirs, for which ſee *Morland*'s hiſtory of the *Valdenſes*. 3. How the church then in her latent and perſecuted ſtate was fed, and kept alive, this confeſſion of their adverſaries may ſhew, that their holding faſt the truth was in no naked form, but by ſuch viſible realities of holineſs, and the life of religion, as did enforce that conviction on others, they lived on the marrow and power thereof, and did burn as well as ſhine in thoſe darkeſt times, as the ſame *Reinerus* confeſſeth, *That amongſt all Sects that had ever been, they were moſt dangerous, others procured horror by their blaſphemies againſt God: But thoſe of the* Valdenſes *and* Lioniſts *had a great appearance of piety, did live uprightly before men, and put their truſt in God in all things, obſerved the whole articles of the chriſtian Creed, only did blaſpheme the church of* Rome, *and held it in contempt, wherein* (ſaith he) *they are eaſily believed by the people.* The ſame witneſs doth *Jacobus de Riberia* bear, *That thoſe* Valdenſes *being ſimple in all things, yet through the excellency of their learning and doctrine, had ſuch weight amongſt the people, and were in ſo great honour, that a man would not hurt his enemy, if he ſhould meet him in the way accompanied with one of thoſe hereticks, ſo as the ſafety of all men ſeemed to conſiſt in their protection, thoſe are his words,* Jac. de Riber. *in collectaneis de urbe* Tholouſæ; holding forth that awful regard, which thoſe who knew their way and familiarly converſed with them, were enforced to have. 4. It was alſo in thoſe ſore afflicting times, that the true church had this obſervable advantage, to ſee ſome clear continued ſucceſſion of witneſſes to the truth againſt the ſame apoſtacy of the time ſtill kept up, ſo as they could trace the footſteps of the ſaints before them, know where their fathers left, yea, from one age to another hath ſtill been delivered, with ſome pure tranſmitting of the ſame doctrine by ſome witneſs, and publick appearance of thoſe, who had gone before, for which they then were put to contend, this is no conjectural thing: but beſide their own records, is acknowledged alſo by their adverſaries, as the ſame *Reinerus* a known and famous writer of the popiſh church ſhews, *That this was one ground, why there was ſuch hazard from them, becauſe they had continued longer than any ſect, ſome ſay from the time of* Sylveſter, *who was contemporary with* Conſtantine, *but others confeſs* (as he ſaith) *from the time of the Apoſtles.* Which was indeed undeniable, that the truth and purity thereof was more ancient, with ſome continued witneſs thereto, before their corrupt and fallen church, and that it is ſure, chriſtianity had gone before Antichriſtianiſm; But upon this ground he was the more enforced hereto, that the true *Valdenſes* was no new upbreaking to own the truth, *upon* Waldo's *firſt appearing at* Lions, as if the tract and ſcent of this clear teſtimony had been before that loſt and unperceiveable; but was only a more obſervable increaſe, and upbreaking in thoſe places,

with a marvelous ſpreading thereof, to own the ſame doctrine, which had been ſtill in ſome viſible teſtimony thereto continued. 4. It may be ſeen in thoſe diſmal times, how the church was then fed alſo by the rod, and had ſome part thereof of the ſame comforts and allowance of the primitive church under *Heathens*, ſo as to gain and grow, the more they were oppreſt, an advantage tryed and known in all the times of the *New Teſtament*, how no connexion in nature is more ſure than this hath been, betwixt the church's moſt diſcernible vigour and luſtre, yea, her trueſt growth and perſecuting times: And as to the ſufferings of thoſe then for ſeveral ages, with the ſore and violent aſſaults they had, and the *Popes* giving forth indulgences at the furtheſt rate, and remitting all ſin to ſuch as would come forth, and take the croſs on them to extirpate this excellent people, whom they dreaded more than the *Pagans*, is at large held forth in the *Martyrologies* of the church.

Sect. 21. We ſee this obſervable providence of the Lord for his truth; by the ſore perſecution of the *Valdenſes*, after they had been firſt excommunicated by *Alexander* the third at *Lions*, how their enforced diſperſion and ſcattering abroad, did tend to the gathering of a great number of churches over *Europe*, as our church hiſtories witneſs, not only thus multiplying over all *France*, *yea*, from the *Alps* to the *Pyrenean* mountains, but got over to *Britain*, with whom *Wickliff* and many others there, did in the ſame doctrine and teſtimony concur, yea, through *Germany*, with ſome places of *Italy*, as after by a more publick united appearance was in the *Kingdom of Bohemia*, the Lord thus marvelouſly ſhewing his being God, in determining thoſe very counſels and actings, for the church's greateſt good, which of all would ſeem moſt deſtructive thereto, as if they intentionally moved for ſuch an end, that men may know there is ſurely a living ſpirit in the wheels, and an infinitely wiſe and unerring conduct, in their ſtrangeſt motions.

Sect. 22. It was a glorious appearance of Jeſus Chriſt for his truth, that teſtimony by *John Huſs*, and *Jerome* of *Prague*, at the Council of *Conſtance*, with what followed thereon in the church of *Bohemia*; a paſſage ſo remarkable, and thoſe convincing circumſtances therewith, that if judicial induration were not a ſtroke which refuſeth all cure, and binds where none can looſe, there could have been no reſiſting this conviction by the world, that ſurely it was the finger of God, and his immediate work, when theſe are conſidered, 1. How in a time of ſuch darkneſs, and the *Romiſh* church at its greateſt height, thoſe were raiſed up with ſome more than ordinary elevation of ſpirit, and of the Lord ſuited to appear on his intereſt: *Æneas Sylvius* himſelf, who afterwards was *Pope*, ſaith that with the ſound of their voice, the ſpirit of God aſſiſting; the word thundering in them, did awake the people out of their dead ſleep, as they run by flocks to this great light, inviting their neighbours thereto. If any queſtion this, ſee *Æn. Sylv. Hiſt. Bohem. cap.* 35. 2. That this teſtimony, even whilſt the church was hid in the wilderneſs, could not get leave to be hid or ſmothered in a corner, but in the moſt publick view, where nothing could be more notour and conſpicuous at the general *Council* of *Conſtance*, the world muſt be forced to ſee, what authority Jeſus Chriſt can put upon the meaneſt of his followers in their appearance for the truth, yea, what another ſpirit this is from that of the world, which could thus ſtand, and withſtand, ſo impetuous a torrent of univerſal apoſtacy, even there where the united ſtrength of the *Romiſh* church and *Empire* were at once met, yea, by patience and reſolution in avowing the truth, overcome their perſecutors, and reſiſt thoſe allurements of preferment, and an honourable place of the church, which were then offered, if they would renounce this doctrine, to which the ſame *Æneas Sylvius cap.* 36. ſhews

what anſwer they made, that they taught the truth, being the diſciples of Chriſt, and directed themſelves according to his goſpel, whilſt the church of *Rome* was departed from the traditions of the Apoſtles, ſeeking after riches, pleaſure and dominion over the people; yea, *Poggius* ſecretary to the ſaid Council, gives this account of *Hierome of Prague*, that being called before the Council, after he had lain for a year in a moſt filthy priſon and fetters, and in want of all earthly comfort, where he could neither read nor ſee, *It was incredible to be ſpoke, how he then anſwered, and with what arguments never ſpoke any thing unworthy of a good man, and at laſt hath theſe words, O man worthy the eternal memory of men. Pogg. in Epiſt. ad Leonard. Aret.* 3. That whilſt they were ſentenced to die, notwithſtanding of the Emperor's aſſurance, and ſafe conduct given, an extraordinary preſence of the Lord in that hour of their ſuffering was thus alſo made publick; for which I ſhall inſert the very words of theſe formentioned writers, whom none could ſuſpect or queſtion to be partial. *Æneas Sylvius* ſays, *That both of them ſuffered death (though not at one time) with a conſtant mind and went joyfully to the fire as to a feaſt, without the leaſt heavineſs or diſcontent, and at the fire ſung an hymn, neither have we read* (ſays he) *of any of the Philoſophers who did ſuffer with more reſolution. And* Poggius *ſpeaking of* Hierome, *ſaith, When the fire was ſet unto him, he began to ſing an hymn, which ſhewed his courage, and when the executioner would have kindled the fire behind his back, that he might not ſee it, come* (ſaith he) *and do it in my ſight, had I feared this, I would not have come here, when I might have avoided it. And in this manner* (ſays he) *was that man rare and excelent beyond all belief, conſumed to aſhes*; and adds: *Neither* Mutius *with ſo conſtant reſolution endured the burning of one member, as he of his whole body; neither* Socrates *ſo willingly drunk his poiſon, as he embraced the fire*, 4. That known prophecy of his at the ſtake, turning to the prelates there preſent, *After an hundred years you ſhall anſwer to God and me*, was then ſo notour and undeniable that upon the money coined after in *Bohemia*, this inſcription was put on the one ſide in *Latin, Centum annis revolutis, Deo reſpondebitis & mihi*; whilſt nothing then of the event could be known, which ſo remarkably anſwered to the firſt breaking up of the Reformation, *Luther*'s appearing being 1517. and *Zuinglius* a little before; and this was *Anno* 1416. 5. Upon this teſtimony ſealed with the blood of theſe excellent men, ſuch wonderful providences did attend the actings of that party in *Bohemia*, then ſtirred up to appear againſt ſuch horrid cruelty, yea, to adventure not only againſt the *Empire*, but that whole formidable power of the *Romiſh* church in *Europe*, as would ſeem almoſt incredible, if the adverſaries themſelves were not enforced to teſtify this: Eleven battles fought by *Ziſcah*, with the Emperor *Sigiſmund*, and ſtill with continued victory, and in ſome of thoſe after he had loſt his ſight; yea, with that witneſs of the terror of the Lord upon the one, and an extraordinary ſpirit of reſolution in the other, as enforced ſometimes the adverſary, when all viſible advantages ſeemed to be on their ſide, to flee at the very firſt appearance of the *Bohemians*, nor could give a reaſon elſe for this, but that a terror thus ſtruck them as they could no longer ſtand, and at laſt was the Emperor put on ſuch terms, as to ſuit and ſupplicate for peace, on which *Æn. Sylv. Hiſt. Bohem. cap.* 46. hath this reflection, *What a ſhame was it, that our age hath ſeen* Sigiſmund *an Emperor, and born of an Emperor, whoſe name* Italy, France, Germany *and all* Europe *honoured, and whom barbarous nations feared, become a ſuppliant to ſuch.* Sure it is, the world then and after ages to this day, cannot but ſee ſomething more than human here, and the immediate appear-

ance

ance of God, for confirming his truth firſt by ſuffering, and after by a ſpirit for acting with ſuch ſtupendious providences, as might ſhew there is no ſtanding for the greateſt of the earth, when the Lord awakes to judgment, to plead the cauſe of the oppreſſed. This alſo was ſome remarkable prelude of that great raiſing of the church, which then was in its approach from under the power and dominion of Antichriſt.

SECT. 23. In conſidering the works of the Lord, and his great appearances, both in judgment and mercy now under the Goſpel to men, this may with aſtoniſhment arreſt our thoughts, the breaking forth at once, and growing up together, of thoſe two prodigies, the foreſt plagues, that ever came on the world, of *Popery* and *Mahumedaniſm*, which as it is clear from the whole conſent of the records of thoſe times, ſo did meet in the very ſame age, and have their firſt appearance, *Mahomet's* diſcovery being in a few years after that title of *Univerſal Biſhop*, upon *Phoca's* donation, was aſſumed by the *Romiſh* church; being thus no leſs diſcernibly linked together in the event, than they are in the ſcripture, *Rev.* ix. Here is indeed one of the greateſt depths of the judgment of God known, ſince the goſpel was ſent to the *Gentiles*, ſuch as hath no parallel in former ages, yet ſuch a viſible ſeal and witneſs to the truth, and brings thoſe advantages for our further confirming therein, as we may wonder how this is not by moſt looked on in another manner. See 1. How both grew up off one root, to wit an apoſtacy from the truth and ſimplicity of the goſpel, yet ſo as the one was diſcernibly ſuited to be a ſtroke and ſcourge on the other, and thus ſee ſuch a fatal conjunction and criſis to be no caſual triſt, but where each giveth light to the other, for making this ſtrange myſtery more clear and intelligible; how judgment follows at the very heels of ſin, and gets ſtrength with its further growth and ripening, yea, how an unuſual manner of ſinning, will not want ſome ſtrange and unuſual a ſtroke. 2. We ſee here the congruity of ſuch a judgment to the condition of the time, that the blood and oppreſſion of the church of Chriſt, under Antichriſtian popery, ſhould be cloſely followed with this bloody oppreſſor the *Turk*. And whilſt moſt had turned brutiſh in their religion, from the pure and ſpiritual worſhipping of God, to the worſhip of *idols of gold and ſilver, the work of mens hands*; ſo ſavage and brutiſh an adverſary ſhould be made their ſcourge. 3. We muſt ſee here alſo how ſore and aſtoniſhing the judgments of the times of the *New Teſtament* are, beyond whatever was known in former ages of the world, that ſince the goſpel is the greateſt of bleſſings, which ever came to the dark world, the greateſt of plagues ſhould be this way executed, ſo as we may with amazement obſerve, how far thoſe places and people, which had once ſinned away this bleſſed light from them, as is here obvious, fell not only under greateſt darkneſs anent the truth of God, but from thoſe advantages of natural and moral endowments; which both in *Greece* and *Rome*, whilſt they were *Heathen*, was ſo diſcernible, before the goſpel came there; yea, how far thus ſunk into that dreadful gulf of immorality and barbariſm. 4. In looking on this ſtrange ſight and appearance of both, we ſee the holy and unſpotted judgment of the Lord, in delivering up mens reaſon and judgment to embrace ſo ſtrange and horrid an impoſtor, as is viſible both in the *Popiſh* and *Mahometan* religion, and how nothing is ſo abſurd and irrationally groſs, with which a corrupt world will not then eaſily ſuit, and drink in, when they have rejected the truth. And is it not ſeen, how both, in their religions, found upon the very ſame ground and authority, which is a maſs of human traditions, with ſome fained and lying wonders to atteſt the ſame; both following the ſame method alſo, to have their doctrine believed, and get credit, with-

without acceſs for any further trial, and that under the greateſt hazard, none may queſtion what is thus obtruded upon them.

Sect 24. It is ſure, the very immediate appearance of God and his hand, may be diſcernible, in raiſing of this *Turkiſh Empire*, and their being extraordinarily called forth on ſuch a remarkable work of judgment againſt the Antichriſtian world, if we conſider. 1. It was upon the very evening of the goſpels departure from the *Eaſtern* parts of the world, and ſuch a ſad period of time, when they firſt brake up. 2. That viſible blaſting of mens counſel, judgment, and ordinary parts, with the failing of their ſpirits and wonted reſolution, where this adverſary came, ſo as the nations and countries about, which had formerly another appearance, could not then ſtand before ſuch a torrent. 3. The hand of the Lord ſtrong upon them, for the ſervice they were called about, ſo as they ran without wearying, and did not ſtumble, as inſtruments viſibly fitted for their work; nothing can be more clear than this is upon peruſal of the hiſtories of thoſe times.

Sect. 25. With what advantage for our further eſtabliſhment in the truth, may we now look on this ſtrange ſight of the *Turkiſh Empire*, when theſe are convincingly evident. 1. That nothing can be more groſs and abſurd, or more viſibly tend to debaſe the nature of man, yea, to expoſe the very name and form of religion to the deriſion of *Atheiſts*, than *Mahometiſm* is in the whole of their way, and the *Alcoran* whereon they found. 2. Nor could theſe ever bring any internal evidence of the truth of their religion, to convince ſuch who would but admit the uſe of reaſon herein, either as to the purity and perfection of the rule, or any ſubſerviency to the glory of God, and ſolid bleſſedneſs of men; both here and in the other world. 3. Such was the undeniable evidence of chriſtianity, when that horrid impoſture of *Mahometiſm* broke up, as this adverſary knew not poſſibly, nor durſt adventure to deny the ſame, in the matter of fact, but to eſſay a darkning thereof by falſe and lying comments; for it is clear they profeſſedly own our bleſſed Redeemer, with moſt of the prophecies of the *Old Teſtament*, and hiſtory of the Evangeliſts; yea, own ſome veneration to the name of the *Meſſias*, though they denied the *Trinity*, and ſeek how to reproach the chriſtian church, from the differences and variety of ſects amongſt them. For this is undeniable, that the moſt inquiſitive and knowing of the adverſaries of chriſtianity, whether *Jews*, *Heathens* or *Mahometans*, could never once attempt to accuſe the chriſtian church of deceit or falſhood in the matter of fact, as it is delivered to us in the goſpel; yea, how are the *Jewiſh Rabbies* racked to evade thoſe ſcriptures in the *Old Teſtament*, that ſo clearly point at the ſufferings of the *Meſſias*, by putting ſome other ſenſe thereon; the truth of that bleſſed hiſtory of the death and ſufferings of our Lord, being ſo publick and famous to all their nation, and before the world, as there could be no poſſible queſtioning thereof.

Sect. 26. It ſurely was no ſtrange accident in nature, but that wherein we muſt look higher to a ſupernatural caſuality, that amazing prodigy which fell out, through moſt of *Germany*, and in other places *Anno* 1501. *of bloody croſſes*, in the true form thereof, appearing not only in publick places and churches, for many days together, but upon the very cloaths of men and women, their tables, linnens, and ſuch things which were of moſt ordinary uſe amongſt them, as almoſt all modern hiſtories particularly ſhew, yea, how for a time theſe could by no poſſible means be waſhed off, *Franciſcus Mirandula* treats particularly about it, and how not only *Maximilian the Emperor*, was ſtruck with aſtoniſhment thereat, but his ſeeing them with his own eyes alſo; it is not tranſmitted to us what impreſſion this ſtrange thing had upon men in that time, but ſure it is convincing and obſervable. 1. That ſuch, who

had in an idolatrous way so much looked after this sign, and made it the object of their adoration, should have it given them as an afflicting prodigy, and this is remarked by the histories of that time, how a dreadful famine within a very little followed thereon. 2. It was under that badge and cognizance, we find the *Romish* church did usually draw forth multitudes, to make slaughter of the followers of Christ, and made so subservient to their design, for shedding the blood of the saints, as in the histories of the *Valdenses* may be seen, and now are they in another manner marked with this strange sign of bloody crosses, which but a very little was before that deluge of blood, after the breaking up of the light of the gospel, that brake forth through *Germany*, *France*, and the *Low-Countries*, and the Lord's giving those, who *had shed the blood of his saints, blood to drink in great measure.*

Sect. 27. Whilst the dawning drew near of that blest day of the church's rising, after that dark night of *Antichristianism*, we may see some previous advantages most remarkably from the Lord falling in, to prepare the way thereof. 1. That in the preceeding age, the knowledge of the *Original languages* begun to break up, and some instruments eminently fitted for the same; human learning did in some further measure revive. 2. Many excellent men of rare endowments then brought forth, beyond what had been known for diverse ages. 3. But which should be most convincing, how then *Anno* 1440. or there about, that rare invention of *Printing* broke up, as a blest and promising presage, to tell the world of the near approach of time, when the temple of God should be opened in heaven, and the *Bible* which had for so many ages been shut up, be universally spread, and thus made accessible, for the poorest boy, or maids, having familiar converse therewith, and to have it at the easiest rate; yea, for bringing forth those works to the world, in defence of the truth, and promoting of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which no pen could ever have possibly reached without the advantage of such a singular mean given of the Lord for his churches use, so that the thing it self was not more marvelous and remarkable, than the time and season of its being brought forth, yea, as those instruments of slaughter, the *Guns* by the invention of *Gun-powder*, did obviously tryst with that solemn time of judgment, when the *Turkish* power was let loose as the scourge of God on the apostate world; this excellent mean of *Printing* should fall in so near with the season, and appointed time of the spreading of the kingdom of Christ, when men should run too and fro, and knowledge be increased.

It will not be unsuitable, er'e I pass this, to give in here some instances of such choice instruments for knowledge and learning, who were then raised up a little before the dawning of that blessed Reformation from Popery, as pioneers to prepare the way of the Lord. 1. As *Rhegio Montanus* who died in the year 1470. One of great knowledge in the *Original* languages, and who had such love to the scripture, as that he wrote the whole *New Testament* in *Greek* with his own hand. 2. *Rodolphus Agricola*, who died 1465. singularly learned in *Philosophy*, *Greek* and *Hebrew* languages, which he studied with a special respect to the knowledge of the scripture, did much lament the churches darkness under which she then lay, and expresly owned the doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ. 3. *Wesselus* born at *Groningen*, and of deserved renown at that time, both for his knowledge in the *Languages*, *Laws* and *Divinity*. At his death, as at length by *Melchior Adams* is shewed, when he was asked by a friend how he did, he answered, his case but conform to his age, and painfulness of his disease, but one thing he was troubled with, which was a being tossed with doubtings anent the truth of christianity, but shortly after, when his friend returned,

with great expreſſions of joy, he ſaid, now bleſſed be the Lord, for all theſe doubtings, and reaſonings are gone, yea I know nothing now, but Chriſt and him crucified, he died 1489. 4. *Moſſilanus* a profeſſor of the *Greek* tongue at *Lipſick*, one of ſingular candour, beſides his great knowledge in the *Original languages*, yea in thoſe dark times moſt convincingly pious alſo, as his epiſtles made to the learned of that age, can witneſs: I judge it edifying to ſet down here, what account he gave of himſelf, with much ſeriouſneſs ſometime before his death: *Let not God, to whom all things are known, be gracious to him in the laſt chock and conflict with death, if he hath not from his youth with greateſt care been concerned to wrong the fame of none unjuſtly, yea to contemn the honours, pleaſures and profits of this natural life, and hath not made this his one thing, to have his ſpirit kept from being defiled with the pollutions of the world, and given up to* Jeſus Chriſt *the alone fountain of wiſdom and knowledge, for being influenced and watered by his ſpirit: This I have had continually in my thoughts, have revolved in the night, this with all earneſtneſs I have contended for, yea hath been firſt in all my deſires, to wit, leſt that ſhould be wanting, which was to that rich man, who came to* Jeſus Chriſt, (when he gave ſuch an account what length he had come) *of the faithful improvement of thoſe talents put under my hand, I can ſay, I had had no other ſcope nor intent, but this in my life: for if I had purſued honours and greatneſs in a world, which might not have been ſucceſsful for ſuch an end, I had taken another way. He died Anno* 1524, at the very breaking up of the Reformation. 5. I ſhall but further add that notable learned man *Capnio*, who died 1521. *Stephanus*, *Eraſmus* truly learned in the languages, and a ſpecial *Critick*, for collating the moſt ancient copies then extant of the *New Teſtament*, whilſt *Printing* was but of late broke up in the world.

CHAP. III.

SECT. 1. IT was at ſuch a time, that bleſſed day begun to dawn of the *church's* delivery from that darkneſs and bondage of *Antichriſtianiſm*, under which for ſo many ages the truth had been in bonds, and the witneſſes thereto enforced to prophecy in ſackcloth; when nothing could have been more ſurpriſing and improbable upon all viſible grounds; that the immediate appearance of God herein, and its being his work alone, might more eminently ſhine forth. A time when, 1. The *Romiſh* power was in its greateſt height and ſplendor, under which almoſt the whole of the weſtern parts did bow, when the empire and nations about were ſo viſibly ſubject and devoted thereto; and whilſt *Leo* X. did reign, the moſt magnificent and ſplendid *Pope* of any had gone before. 2. When thus the chriſtian world was under ſuch darkneſs, with that implicite reliance on the *Romiſh* church, as there needed no more, but for the *Pope* to ſend one of his emiſſaries, if he deſired money, with a patent for indulgences and be confident thus to get in a vaſt treaſure, as the ſaid *Leo* did, in commiſſionating *Texelius* a *Friar*, who met with that ſucceſs, as in each city where he came, he was met by perſons of all ranks in proceſſions, and magiſtrates of towns, the *Pope's* grant being ſpread forth in parchment written in letters of gold was carried before him, and in that manner received, as the church hiſtories ſhew, as if our bleſſed Redeemer had come down to the earth. 3. A time when every where the chriſtian world was ſo ſtrangely ſubjected to blind *ſuperſtition*, their conſcience, as well as perſons under the awe and dread of the *Romiſh* power, and of thoſe *legendary* wonders and *miracles*, which were then ſo continually noiſed, and apparitions

ons of the dead to be delivered out of purgatory; then was that time alſo, when a ſtandard was diſplayed for the truth, and that Jeſus Chriſt met his enemies in their greateſt ſtrength.

Sect. 2. This may be further convincing and manifeſt, what diſadvantages the firſt ſtirrings of that glorious Reformation had, and what a ſtrong tide of oppoſition went againſt it, if we conſider. 1. How this was to purſue a change in religion, and pull men from a way, in which they and their fathers had for ſo many ages been rooted. 2. To purſue this with ſo viſible an oppoſition to their carnal eaſe, and delights in the fleſh; to which the *Popiſh* religion was ſo ſpecially ſuited. 3. When ſuch a party was to contend with, as was publickly owned by the example and countenance of the greateſt princes and monarchs of the earth, and had theſe viſible advantages for engaging the world, as the baits of honour, riches and preferment, whilſt the alone ſtrength of the Reformed churches then was prayers and tears, and in the naked truth and ſimplicity of godlineſs. 4. Whilſt thus the *Reformed* religion did lie under that ſcandal to the world of the croſs, contempt, a low and afflicted ſtate, yea no viſible encouragements to commend the ways of the Lord to any, but the arms of their warfare ſpiritual, yet might through God, whilſt the ſtrength of their adverſaries was carnal, and followed with what in an ordinary way, and on grounds of humane reaſon, might ſeem inſuperable; ſo as a learned and judicious man upon *Luther*'s firſt appearance, ſhewed him, that it was unqueſtionably the truth he bare witneſs to, but was in vain for him, or any ſuch to adventure further, when nothing elſe was left, but to retire to a cell, and pray, *Miſerere mei.*

Sect. 3. We ſee, what a remarkable calm of outward peace, not in *Germany* only, but moſt of the nations about did then tryſt with the dawning of this day, when the truth began to ſhine forth, after that long night of antichriſtian darkneſs on the world; yea how this for ſome little time continued, both in the cloſe of *Maximilian* I. his reign, and entry of *Charles* V. that thus the voice of the goſpel in the bleſſed providence of the Lord, might with the more advantage, get a publick hearing amongſt men, and without that diſturbance of the noiſe and confuſions of war; as it was alſo moſt remarkable, at that bleſſed, bleſſed time of the manifeſtation of the *Meſſias*, yea thus not only the earth's being ſtill and at reſt for a ſhort time; but a reſtraint alſo upon the rage and fury of men to perſecute, until the ſeed ſown had begun to take ſome root, and a people prepared for the Lord. So as we find no remarkable violent aſſaults, or hot perſecution in *France*, until the reign of *Henry* II. nor in *Germany*, and other adjacent places, for a time there, *Charles* V. being upon politick grounds, and by reaſon of that friendſhip he had for the *Duke* of *Saxony* (but by a ſupreme over ruling power) engaged for a little to ſome moderation.

Sect. 4. It was then a new face began to appear on the world, and whilſt ſo great a harveſt was near, the reapers alſo prepared ſuch a rare concurrence of inſtruments for the ſervice of that day, as all might ſee it to be the work and immediate power of God. 1. By ſuch remarkable variety of gifts ſuited to the ſervice of that time; and for what the church then needed, not only to perſwade and apply the truth to the conſcience, but thoſe ſent forth who were mighty in the ſcriptures, as well as fervent in ſpirit, to convince and inform, as in no former ages had been known, ſince the times of the Apoſtles. 2. What choice and wailed inſtruments ſuch were, who were thus called forth not to publiſh the doctrine of the goſpel only, but to contend for it againſt all oppoſers, with the furtheſt advantages of human learning, as well as divine, as might indeed put the world to enquire, whence had thoſe come, when a few

ſuch

ſuch in an age formerly would have been a wonder and amazement. 3. It cannot be denied, but the calling of ſuch inſtruments in the entry of the Reformation was in part extraordinary, and is clear 1. How in no ordinary way thoſe could ever have adventured to anſwer ſo great a ſervice, as they were then ſent upon; or had the leaſt promiſing appearance of ſuch ſucceſs, as after followed, to be an incitement to their work. 2. That power and authority of God they went forth with, as all might ſee ſome thing more than human in it. 3. The hand of the Lord made ſtrong upon them, to go forth upon his call, and leave all to follow him, who might otherwiſe have had ſuch advantages of credit and eaſe in the world, without which ſome extraordinary enforcement upon their ſpirits, could not poſſibly be underſtood. And it is clear, that a greater out-letting of the ſpirit was then, than can be inſtanced even ſince the firſt times of the chriſtian church.

SECT. 5. It is undeniable, that ſuch whom the Lord ſo eminently made uſe of in the firſt breaking up of the Reformation, had no viſible bait or incitement from any outward advantage could be expected. 2. The doctrine they owned and contended for ſo expreſly, that of ſelf denial, and to take up the croſs, to repreſs and oppoſe thoſe incitements of the grandeur and outward ſplendor of church-men, and to ſhew that the being miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, was a matter of work and labour, yea of ſuffering, when a teſtimony to the truth called for this, which required ſubduedneſs and mortification to the fleſh; and nothing thus to commend or make deſirable their work, but that it was the ſervice of ſuch a bleſſed maſter, and that reſpect to the recompence of reward, which is above. 3. It is ſure, no lucrative deſign could be ſuppoſed here, in embracing the Proteſtant doctrine and profeſſion thereof, ſince thus nothing could have been more perſwading to Popery, and that way, when ſuch of mean and ordinary parts were ſo eaſily advanced to the moſt gainful places amongſt them; but it is known with what ſweet and chearful contentedneſs of ſpirit thoſe great and bleſſed inſtruments of Reformation, ſuch as *Luther*, *Zuinglius*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, *Bucer*, &c. followed their work, whoſe outward encouragements were ſuch only as were indiſpenſably neceſſary, who might otherwiſe have had the greateſt benefices amongſt their adverſaries: but as it was ſaid in the *Romiſh* conclave of *Luther*, *Beſtia hæc non curat aurum*: *This* Beaſt *don't value gold*. They were enforced to ſee, that it was ſome greater thing, than gold and ſilver, that influenced ſuch in following the Lord. And what was it that ſhould cauſe that excellent man *Peter Martyr*, quite all his places and preferments in *Italy*, when he was prior of a conſiderable monaſtery at *Luca*, made general viſitor of one of their orders, and in ſuch favour with the greateſt of the *Romiſh* clergy, for following the work of the miniſtry; and chooſe an uncertain and ſuffering lot elſewhere? Alſo *Muſculus* that worthy ſervant of Chriſt, after he was choſen prior of a monaſtery, where he had been, to quite all for the truth, and come to *Strasburgh* in a mean condition, where for a time he was brought to that ſtrait before he was known, as to dig in the town ditches, with a ſweet ſubjectedneſs of ſpirit herein, who might have lived in greateſt outward pleaſure and advantage otherwiſe. It could be no lucrative intereſt, that enforced *Vergerius*, who had been the *Pope's* legate in *Germany*, in the ſtate and condition of a prince, and expecting to be a cardinal, to forſake all his hopes, and upon his greateſt hazard to preach the truth, againſt which formerly he had ſo much appeared. And to ſhew there is no ſtanding before the power and authority thereof, whilſt deſignedly writing againſt the truth, was converted to the knowledge thereof.

SECT. 6. We ſee, whilſt that time was once come of the Lord's appearance for his Church, this providence made conſpicuous, that the greateſt engine which had been to fix the *Popiſh* intereſt, and keep the world under ſub-

jection thereto, ſhould be the firſt mean of its fall and breaking, to wit, the *Pope*'s power for abſolution, and remitting of ſin, by which his dominion over the conſciences of men had got the deepeſt root; upon which *Luther* that great inſtrument in the hand of the Lord was firſt called to appear againſt *Popery*, when *Texelius* kept ſuch a market in *Germany* to put the *Pope's Indulgences* to ſale; to whom *Luther* (then but an obſcure perſon) went requiring in behalf of Chriſt, the grant of one of thoſe *Indulgences*, but was rejected, without he gave money for it, pretending the *Pope* had need thereof, and by no importunity of thoſe that then were preſent could be perſwaded herein, a providence which may call us to theſe grave remarks. 1. How the counſels of adverſaries are oft determined to bring forth the very contrary effects, and *the wicked ſnared with the work of their own hands.* 2. How diſcernibly the Lord's time of working is, when it may be leaſt our time of expecting. 3 From how ſmall, and very ordinary things to appearance, have the greateſt revolutions of providence about the church had their firſt riſe.

Sect. 7. This the world was enforced to ſee, how the truth and doctrine of the Reformed churches, when once it began to break up in the firſt times of the Reformation, did then offer it ſelf to the publick light and trial of all; to be known and ſearched out in what their greateſt adverſaries could object; yea this with a moſt ſolemn and publick reference in the ſcripture, and the pure primitive times of chriſtianity. Thus may all ſee, how thoſe bleſſed inſtruments in the Reformation, *by pureneſs, by long ſuffering, by the word of truth, by the armour of God on the right hand and on the left* did oppoſe themſelves to the adverſe party: thence were thoſe famous meetings for publick *diſputation*, which at length are recorded in the late hiſtories of the church, where the truth did ſo convincingly juſtify it ſelf, with that prevalence and authority on the conſciences of men, not only to break the adverſaries confidence, and force the weapons out of their hand, but to enforce an open confeſſion of many, yea to a publick reformation alſo by the magiſtrates in moſt conſiderable cities, and this without tumult or blood. As, 1. At *Zurick* 1525, ſet down at length by *Hottinger* in his *Eccleſiaſtick hiſtory*, with that marvelous change that then followed, in aboliſhing the *Maſs*, idolatrous images, and ſetting up the true worſhip of God. 2. At *Baden* 1526. whereon followed ſuch a publick reformation through that country, ſo as abbacies and monaſteries were given up, and their revenues applied to colleges, and ſuch publick uſes. 3. At *Bearne* 1527. *December* 17. where the Senate and moſt of the adjacent Clergy were preſent, was that ſolemn publick appearance for the truth by diſpute, whereon followed (after by the preached goſpel, for ſometime before, the truth had been getting ground on the conſciences of many) ſuch a total abolition of *Popery*, and ſetting forward an effectual reformation, as the day and year was by publick order in gold letters ſet upon a pillar. 4. That memorable, and ſolemn meeting at *Geneva* 1534. *May* 30. where *Farellus* and *Viret*, with ſome others of the Proteſtant church there on the one ſide, with ſome of the moſt learned of the Popiſh doctors on the other, did in that great confluence meet, where after much ſerious diſpute and conference, ſuch was the bleſſed were and authority of the truth upon the conſciences of men, as not only tended to a more ſolemn and univerſal reformation through the city, with an inſcription of the year and day, by a publick decree on a plate of braſs: but which was moſt remarkable, that thoſe adverſaries themſelves, who moſt oppoſed in the diſpute, particularly *Chappuſius*, a learned *Dominican*, and others were ſo overcome, that by a rare example of candor and ingenuity, they made publick confeſſion of the truth. This at length may be read in that excellent

diſ-

diſcourſe of learned *Spanhemius* called *Geneva Reſtituta*, and ſeveral other writers. And it is clear, whatever falling off ſeems this day by many to *Popery*, it is upon no debate, or by arguments to convince the judgment, but that their greateſt ſtrength and advantage, is the ſad abounding *Atheiſm* and ignorance of this time, yea, that thus prophane and licentious ſpirits do find ſo favourable a retreat and patrociny in that way.

SECT. 8. Is it not undeniable to the conviction of all, how ſuch a *cruelty* hath been exerciſed by the popiſh adverſaries in theſe late perſecutions of the church, as no former times, even under the moſt ſavage of *Heathens*, give a parallel, yea, ſuch as a moſt viſible incitement and power of the Devil could only be underſtood herein. *Inſtances* are ſo innumerable, as it might be a work by it ſelf to inſert, which the moſt grave and known hiſtories of the late times give account. Nor is it ſtrange, why the *Popiſh cruelty* ſhould even be a length beyond that of the *Heathens*, ſeeing it was againſt a greater light, and in a more expreſs way doing violence to the ſpirit of God, in diſcoveries of the truth to their own conſcience. I ſhall but give this ſhort touch, what that *Maſſacre of Paris* was, which went through moſt of *France*, where ſuch aſtoniſhing things are in all hiſtories thereof given, as we ſhould judge human nature, though corrupt, would fear, and be affrighted at; how they ſpared not infants in the cradle, nor in their mothers womb, the ſtreets covered with mangled bodies, and their blood running in the highways, nothing almoſt to be heard, but the cries and groans of the dying, with that helliſh noiſe and ſhoutings of the murderers: yea this, where they could pretend no perſonal provocation in the leaſt: one of thoſe horrid wretches ſnatching up a little child, whilſt it ſmiled on him, and began to play with him, did kill it forth-with, and threw it in its blood into the river. At *Trois*, the blood of the ſlain Proteſtants run ſo violently forth out of the priſon doors where they were murthered, as it run through the channel into the river, and turned it into the colour of blood, which cauſed an horror to ſome of their own way. And at *Lions*, where moſt prodigious cruelties were uſed by *Mandelot* the governor, that when ſome *Papiſts* after went into the priſons, where the ſlaughter had been, and ſaw ſuch a ſight of dead corps, and in what manner mangled and hewed in pieces, as ſome had no part of human ſhape remaining, were enforced to confeſs, that ſurely theſe were not men, but Devils in the likeneſs of men, who had done this, as moſt grave writers off that time atteſt: nor were theſe things in any private way, or in a corner done, but ſuch as the adverſaries could never offer to contradict in the matter of fact. For that late amazing *Maſſacre* in *Ireland* by the *Iriſh Papiſts* there, to which they were moſt preſſingly incited by their prieſts and church-men, it is ſo known in this age, as if it were yet preſent before us. But beſides thoſe, let any read *Paulus Servetus*, that famous excellent *Venetian*, though profeſſedly popiſh, his *Hiſtory of the Spaniſh Inquiſition*, what could be more of cruelty and ſtrange engines thereof, if infernal ſpirits (as ſuch thoſe may be truly called) were ſitting in that bench of the *Court of Inquiſition*.

SECT. 9. That hath been with the furtheſt evidence made clear, and a truth now of ſingular uſe for the church's ſupport and ſtrengthning, that no human power or force could yet ever undo that bleſſed intereſt of the Reformed Religion, though put forth to the furtheſt againſt the ſame; but that it hath ſtill in theſe late times gained more ground by the moſt formidable aſſaults and oppoſition, than by the greateſt calms. Anent which, theſe particulars I ſhall in a few words here offer to be conſidered. 1. What a remarkable iſſue all the counſels, expence and cruelty of *Philip* the IId. of *Spain* had, to bear down the riſing of the goſpel in the *Netherlands*, which at laſt by the mar-

marvelous appearance of God for his church there, did moſt effectually tend to the eſtabliſhment of the united Provinces, and as it was then obſervable, how at once the riſe and outward flouriſh of that Common-wealth, and their owning the intereſt of God did moſt viſibly go together. 2. How immediate the appearance of God was, for counteracting that formidable and united confederacy of the *Catholick League in France* in that time, to the conviction of the world, and how all their eſſays and counſels did at laſt reſolve in their own ruin. 3. I ſhall here give *Eraſmus*'s obſerve upon this, in one of his *epiſtles*, *At Bruſſels* two ſuffered for the Reformed Religion, would you know the product thereof, (ſays he) *That city which had been moſt free of thoſe, found quickly ſuch to ſpread amongſt them moſt diſcernibly, yea, what ſhall I ſay* (ſaith he) *both here in* Holland *and every where, where violence is once exerciſed againſt thoſe of the Reformed religion, it tends but to their further increaſe.* With which I would add ſome words of *Farellus* in a letter to *Zuinglius* in the year 1525. which are indeed weighty. *Si unquam ſeſe obtulit lætitiæ & gaudii ratio propter perſecutiones, ejectiones ob Chriſtum nunc quam maxime: nam quid quæſo intentatum relinquunt impii, ſcire velim vel unam rimulam ſupereſſe, qua pios aggredi poſſunt, quam non ſunt perſcrutati. Verum ſi Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos. To wit, that never was there more true cauſe of joy and gladneſs, than now is under ſaddeſt ſufferings for Chriſt, for what hath the Adverſary untried I would know, if the leaſt chink acceſſible, by which they might trouble and aſſault any of the ſaints in this time, which they have not narrowly ſearched: But ſince the Lord himſelf is for his people, it is enough.* 4. I ſhall but further mention for this ſome words of that famous late hiſtorian *Thuan*, in his epiſtle dedicatory to his hiſtory to *Henry* the IVth. *We are ſufficiently taught by experience, that neither the ſword, the fire, exile or proſcription can in the leaſt do the turn againſt the Reformed Religion, but tends more to put it forward, yea, how in this kingdom, the more they are purſued, the more their number and authority grows, and rather ſeems to loſe ground, when they have moſt outward peace. It is* (ſaith he) *worthy of remark the report of one here amongſt us, when brought to the ſtake, to be burnt for owning his religion, how he ſung a pſalm, while he was bound to it, ſo as both the fire and the ſmoke breaking forth upon him, did ſcarce interrupt this; and when the executioner a little before was kindling the fire behind the place where he ſtood, that he might not ſee it, he ſaid to him, come and let it be kindled before me, for if I had feared this fire, I needed not to have come hither, but could eaſily have eſcaped.*

Sect. 10. Thus hath the Lord appeared in theſe late ages of the church, that almoſt no kingdom, or place, where *Popery* hath this day its power and advantage, but there alſo hath the truth had an eminent triumph, and a publick witneſs given thereto, ſealed with the blood of the ſaints. As that account the church martyrologies give of the ſore perſecutions 1. In *Spain*, where at one time in *Sevil* 800 chriſtians were under inquiſition for the truth, and 20 burned in one fire, with a peculiar relation both of the torment and conſtancy of ſuch, in many notable inſtances; as that of *Juliano*, who had been moſt inſtrumental to get many *Bibles*, that were printed in *Germany*, in the *Spaniſh Language*, both conveyed and ſpread through *Spain*; but being taken at laſt, was thrown into priſon, where he lay three years, for the moſt part laden with fetters, though neither pain, threatnings, nor extremity of the rack did in the leaſt cauſe him faint, but when he returned from the rack would ſay to his fellow-ſufferers, *They depart vanquiſhed, and fly with ſhame*; and at his death, with a cheerful countenance exhorted thoſe that were to ſuffer with him, to be comforted, ſince *now was the hour for them*

them to witneſs for God, and his truth, before men; and within a few hours, we ſhall have him to witneſs for us, and triumph with him for ever. Likewiſe *Pontius* a learned and pious man, who with great reſolution ſuffered for the truth there. And that excellent young man called *Ferdinando*, a member of the congregation at *Seville*, whoſe torments both on the rack and trough he ſo cheerfully endured, though in that manner ſhaken, that he could not go, but was dragged into his priſon, and after to the fire, beſides many other divers choice women, yea, ſome of great quality, who ſealed the truth there with their blood. 2. What a conſpicuous victory did the truth have alſo in *Italy*, thoſe famous witneſſes, who ſuffered there, both in *Ferrara* and *Venice*, amongſt whom was that choice gentleman *Anthony Ricceto*, to whom the *Venetian* Senators offered to free his eſtate of ſome morgage it was under, beſides his liberty, if he would retract his confeſſion, which he refuſed. *Franciſcus Sega* and *Spinola* alſo Perſons conſiderable, and of note there, who thus reſiſted unto death for the truth; yea at *Rome* it ſelf beſides others we have theſe notable inſtances; one of that rare gentleman *Algerius*, who ſometime lived at *Padua*, whoſe relation he gives himſelf of the unexpreſſible comforts and joy, he had in priſon, is at large ſet down in our martyrologies, was tranſported at laſt to *Rome*; where after many aſſaults and perſwaſions to recoil, he moſt ſtedfaſtly embraced death, and was burnt there alive. Alſo *Johannes Mollius*, a moſt eminent preacher of the word, whoſe publick confeſſion and appearance for the truth he at laſt ſealed with his blood in the ſame place. I ſhall but add that paſſage further of *Barth. Fontius*, being called from *Venice* to *Rome* upon the *Pope's* publick faith given for his ſafety; but after his reſolute adherence to the truth there, and confeſſion thereof, was moſt cruelly put to death in the year 1538. as that account given in a letter to *Bullinger* thereof, doth at more length ſhew; as alſo that after his death there were many even at *Rome*, remarkably ſtirred up to appear for the truth and own it in his room.

Sect. 11. We may ſee amidſt thoſe remarkable wreſtlings, the churches of Chriſt then had for the truth ſome ſore and ſearching aſſaults, that almoſt met at once, both by that out breaking of the ſpirit of error in *Germany*, from the dreadful party of the *Anabaptiſts*, ſo ſtrangely then let looſe, and the decrees and hot perſecution by the Emperor which then followed there, anent which I ſhall but ſet down a part of two of *Luthers* letters to worthy *Melanthon*, whoſe ſpirit was then much ſunk under the weight of theſe, firſt as to the *Anabaptiſts* he thus writes, whilſt he was in his *Patmos* being forced to retire. *They pretend to have revelations from the ſpirit, and conferences with God. I commend not the fears, and ſeeing theſe bear witneſs of themſelves, they ſhould not be regarded for that, but as* John *ſaith, try the ſpirits, my advice is, that ye try whether they can prove their calling, for God never ſent away, but being either called by men or declared by ſigns, no, not his own Son, and in no wiſe to aceept an aſſerting of their call by a naked revelation. The Prophets formerly had their power according to the law and prophetical order, as we now by men. This is eſpecially neceſſary unto the publick function of preaching, and that ye may try their private ſpirit, ye may try whether they know anguiſh of mind, the new and ſpiritual birth, to be exerciſed about death and hell, if you hear all things from them ſmooth and pleaſant, though they call it devote and religious, and ſhould ſay, they have been raviſhed into the third heaven, approve them not, becauſe they want the ſign of the Son of Man, the only power of Chriſtians, and ſure ſearcher of ſpirits, would ye know the place and way of talking with God, it is here; as a lion he hath broken all my bones, and I was caſt forth from his face, my ſoul was filled with ſorrows, and my life*

drew near unto hell: try therefore, and hear not a glorious Jesus, unless you knew he was crucified. Thus doth that great man write, *Tom.* ii. of his *Epistles.* A second letter he wrote was upon their sharp threatnings and apparent hazards of that time, whilst *Melancthon* gave himself to weeping, and in much anguish, not for himself as he professed, for he knew what he believed, as for the posterity to whom *Luther* hath these words, (If this be the cause of God and not of man, all the burden should be cast on him, why dost thou afflict and torment thy self, seeing God hath given his Son for us, why do we tremble or fear! will he forsake us in smaller things, who hath given us so great a gift? Is Satan stronger than God? Should we fear the world, which Christ hath overcome? If the cause we contend for be not the truth, let us change; but if the cause be holy and just, why do we not credit the promise and faithfulness of God? Its sure Satan can reach no further, but this present life; but Christ reigneth for ever under whose protection the truth now is, he will not fail to be with us unto the end. If he be not with us, I beseech, where shall he be found? If we be not of his church, do ye think that the Bishop of *Rome*, and our adversaries are of it? We are indeed sinners, but Christ is true, whose cause we have in hand. Let kings and nations threaten and fume as they please, he that sits in heaven shall laugh them to scorn, he hath maintained his cause hitherto without our counsel, and so he will do unto the end.) See this at length in *Sleidan*'s *Com. lib.* vii. Thus we see how the Lord was pleased such different ways to exercise his church and people then, and from what airt they had their encouragement alone, when all visible props were most broke under their hand.

Sect. 12. In considering this great work of God about his church in these last times, we may see how not at once, but by a gradual advance and renewed conflicts with much wrestling hath the truths advance and victory over *Antichristianism* been brought forward, yea, what changes has thus gone over the church, with most remarkable trials and extremities, that have been the very entry to most surprising enlargements of her comfort and outgate. Which for our strengthning and establishment in the truth, to see thus both the scripture and event thereof in these providences now before our eyes, I shall touch but a little in some grave and weighty remarks hereof. 1. That the Lord's opening a great and effectual door by the gospel to his church, hath in these last times so discernibly still had such great opposition therewith, as almost it will be hard to find any where, or at any time, where these have not kept together. 2. That no sore and pressing assault by *Antichrist* and his followers we have seen was put on foot against the church, but might be found in the close and issue, to have put her interest forward, and for the furtherance of the gospel. 3. Tho thus, even with the incoming of the tide, such dark hours and renewed conflicts were in that manner often, as made the rise and advantage of the Reformed churches to be the alone object of his peoples faith and not of their sense, it is most convincing and clear also, how *Antichrist's* fall and judgment, in the various steps thereof, must be in such a manner looked for, and expresly by the scripture held forth, with a peculiar resemblance to that judgment with *Pharoah* and the *Egyptians*, of whom he appears to have been a *type*; with these judicial strokes of induration on both, and gradual procedure by one plague after another; yea, this with the same product and effect: not to cease, as *Pharoah* then did for pursuing that quarrel, and with renewed assaults after any respite from judgment, until the holy God do once for all make his power known, as at the *Red-Sea*, and bring forth that blessed victory, when the song of *Moses* and the *Lamb* shall be sung together. Nor should it be strange, if most immediately before this then the darkest hour, and most sharp assault from Antichrist may be expected; yea, which

with

with some assured confidence from the scripture, and providences of this time compared therewith, I may adventure to write, now is this time, and present approach thereof, before a greater height of that promised victory, than any which hath ever yet been known over Antichristian Popery, be brought forth.

CHAP. IV.

IN this dark hour now on the church, which almost every where is afflicting and sad, and so many ready to stumble and faint, it might be of greatest use and weight to bring near our thoughts, and have this still kept in sight, what an undeniable and marvelous witness from the Lord hath been to the publick cause and doctrine of the Reformed churches, for confirming the faith of his people herein, and convincing others; yea, how in diverse instances the Lord's way in the inbringing and building his church in the last time, may be seen extraordinary and *miraculous*, as I shall briefly touch in these following *sections*.

SECT. 1. That *swift progress and conquest*, which the truth then had in this great day of the gospels triumph, and what interest it got for the fixing of those famous plantations of the church through much of *Germany*, *France*, *Switzerland*, *Holland*, *Denmark*, the *Low-Countries*, with *Britain* and *Ireland*, in less than forty years time, with which these things are observable. 1. How the truth of the gospel then *came not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance*, 1 *Thess.* i. 5. Assurance of faith and understanding anent the truth, and with that seal of the greatest enlargement of joy and comfort; so as *the receiving of the word in much affliction was with joy of the Holy Ghost*, *v.* 6. 2. That in this blessed way and truth of the Reformed Religion now owned and profest, the church did receive the Spirit, and so innumerable a company in these last ages were sealed thereby, which is that undoubted seal and attestation from the Lord of his own truth and doctrine thereof, so expresly promised to his church under the *New Testament*. 3. That this high spring-tide of the power and efficacy of the word was after so sad and visible a restraint had been for many ages before, whilst Antichristian darkness had overspread the visible church; but what of the work of the spirit was then more known, as a private seal on the hearts of the godly in those times of sackcloth and latent condition in the wilderness; not in any such way, as a publick confirmatory witness to the truth, and with that *evidence and demonstration of the Holy Ghost*, before the world, as hath been now since the Reformation: after this blessed day once began to dawn, *that the Lord did so visibly rent the heavens, and caused the mountains flow down at his presence*, with so solemn a down-pouring of the Spirit following the gospel, as there could be no standing, but cities and nations were subjected to so marvelous a power, for embracing of the truth. 4. That this great work of God was no transient glance, or for a short time; but for many years where-ever the truth came, did most discernibly accompany the same, not only to affect and convince by some transient flash upon the spirits of men, but to that solid and effectual change, as had thus a visible transforming into that blessed image of Christ *by the spirit of holiness, so as it was given both to believe and suffer for his name*. 5. That this assuredly was above all secondary causes, is such as the greatest *Atheist* may see, and how little interest instruments then called forth could have in it, but that it was the immediate power of God, yea, such as even enforced the Antichristian world to wonder and be in a strange amaze, what such a thing could mean, to see this spreading of the truth in so short a time, yea, over the belly of mens furthest violence and opposition thereto, where no outward gain or advantage

vantage could be poſſibly known, ſo as to them it might look as ſome univerſal enchantment; but then, O then, was *the goings of the Lord ſeen in his ſanctuary full of Majeſty, and the ſhout of a King in the midſt of his people*; the miniſtration of life and power did attend his ordinances, whilſt the hearers might be ſeen with their ears and hearts at once arreſted under a melting frame of ſpirit, and as embracing the word with their arms.

SECT. 2. This great witneſs and confirmation of the truth hath been given thereto ſince the late Reformation; *that ſuch a remarkable growth and ſpreading of the church, and her ſoreſt oppreſſion from men ſhould ſo viſibly contemporate and meet in the ſame time*, and this to be the very ſeaſon of building his houſe, yea, which paſſeth all natural underſtanding, when theſe are ſo clear. 1. That ſuch ſufferings for the truth were not by a few, which could have been judged as ſome ſtrange and unuſual an occurrent only: but of ſo innumerable a company, *who thus overcame by the blood of the Lamb and their word of the teſtimony, and loved not their lives unto death.* 2. Who were not in one place and corner only, where they could all meet and have a joint correſpondence with other; but in parts of the earth of ſo remote diſtance, yea, of ſeveral nations tongues and languages, and theſe alſo of ſuch different ages and ſexes. 3. Of theſe ſo many wiſe, knowing and judicious, whom none could judge ever to have adventured on ſo viſible a ruin and ſuffering, without the greateſt aſſurances of the truth, and that undoubtedly it was their intereſt and up-making otherwiſe, whilſt none then could embrace the truth of the Reformed Religion, but on ſuch terms alſo to embrace a ſuffering and perſecuting lot. 4. That here might be ſeen not more of conſtraint from men, than a viſible choice and delight on their part to encounter the ſame, when a confeſſion of the truth neceſſarily called thereto. Yea, (as it is known from the ſureſt records of the church, ſince the Reformation) even to a courting of the flames, that they might get a ſhare of that bleſſed triumph, yea, ſuch as have been found to ſhrink, and ſome times to faint upon the approach of leſſer troubles, thus raiſed above themſelves with greateſt exultation of ſpirit, to quite wife, children, eſtate and life for the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt, as is not conceiveable without an immediate divine power, and furtherance of truth, with ſome unconceiveable ſight and lively hope of that glory which is in another world.

SECT. 3. It was then whilſt the ſaints were thus ſent forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves, that ſo viſible a fulfilling of that promiſe of our Maſter, even to the conviction of the world, was made out, *Matth.* x. 19, 20. *When they ſhall deliver you up, and lead you before rulers, take no thought, for it ſhall be given you in that hour what ye ſhall ſpeak, for it is not you that ſpeak, but the ſpirit of your Father, which ſpeaketh in you, and* Luke xxi. 15. *For I will give you a mouth and wiſdom, which all your adverſaries ſhall not be able to reſiſt or gainſay.* Which may be yet matter of aſtoniſhment to conſider. 1. With what advantage in a grave and ſerious compoſure of ſpirit ſuch did depart, as were then called to witneſs for Chriſt, and with that evidence of the ſenſible preſence of their Maſter with them, as made them no leſs a wonder to themſelves, than they were to others. 2. How thus the authority of the truth did appear even in the meaneſt of thoſe bleſſed witneſſes to confound and ſilence the adverſary with amazement, that as the high prieſts, when the apoſtles were before them, were enforced to have this remark, that they were but mean and unlearned men, and took notice that they had been with Jeſus. 3. Nor can it be in queſtion with any, who do not ſhut their eyes hereat, that this could not poſſibly be of themſelves, or aſcribed to fleſh and blood, but to the immediate aſſiſtance of the

the Holy Ghoſt. Yea, nothing could have been leſs expected in an ordinary way, conſidering of what rank and condition in the world many of theſe were, who with the firſt breaking up of the work of Reformation, were then called to witneſs and ſuffer for the truth, of whom we have ſo ſweet and large an account tranſmitted, what ſurpriſing light, ſtrength, freedom of ſpirit, and reſolution was in that preſent hour given, where there had not wanted moſt ſenſible faintings and fears before. It is a moſt grave remark, and worthy to be noted, which doctor *Ridley* hath in a letter to Mr. *Bradford* whilſt in priſon, which is this. *It is wonderful to behold, how the wiſdom of God hath infatuated the policy of the world, and ſcattered the crafty devices of the wiſe, for when the ſtate of religion was once altered here, and perſecution began to grow hot, no man doubted but* Cranmer, Latimer *and* Ridley, *ſhould have been firſt called to the ſtake: But the ſubtile policy of the world ſetting us apart, firſt aſſaulted them by whoſe weakneſs and infirmity they thought to have more advantage: But God diſappointed their ſubtile purpoſes, for whom the world eſteemed the weakeſt, they found* (praiſed be God) *moſt ſtrong, valiant and ſound in Chriſt's cauſe unto the death, to give ſuch an onſet, as I dare ſay, all the angels in heaven do no leſs rejoice to behold in them, than they did in the victorious conſtancy of* Peter, Paul, Iſaias, Elias *or* Jeremy.

Sect. 4. It was not extraordinary only, but in ſome manner might be called truly *miraculous*, that *reſolution and joy*, which attended chriſtians then in their extremeſt ſufferings, and thoſe comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, which they did witneſs. This muſt be acknowledged amongſt the great things of the Lord, and his immediate appearance, in making himſelf thus to be admired in his ſaints, thoſe bleſſed ſuffering witneſſes to his truth in theſe laſt times. An *Hiſtory* of that import and weight, which brings in a rent therewith, for confirming the church in after times, and to the praiſe and glory of her bleſſed Head, as doth to the furtheſt compenſate all that blood (*precious in the ſight of the Lord*) and foreſt wreſtlings of his people. Yea, where, 1. Its ſure, none can ſuppoſe a diſſimulation, or that this could be a counterfeit or perſonate buſineſs, what thoſe choice witneſſes of Chriſt did then witneſs, of that unexpreſſible joy and comfort they felt upon their ſoul; or that ſuch would then ceaſe to ſpeak the truth, who in that very hour for the truth's ſake had chooſed death rather than life, and were ſtepping in upon eternity. 2. Whilſt nothing viſible could be known to give a riſe thereto, is ſuch that no natural reaſon can comprehend, as if they had foregone human paſſions, and that feeling, which fleſh and blood muſt needs have of ſuch torments they then endured. 3. Yea, which our nature cannot but abhore and ſhrink at, and whilſt life is ſo ſweet and natural for all to ſeek and preſerve, and on the ſmalleſt receding from the truth, deliverance was ſo eaſy to be had, ſure this (even the moſt profeſt Atheiſts being appealed to herein) muſt enforce a conviction of a more excellent ſpirit than that of the world. 4. That this alſo was no product of a diſtempered judgment, whilſt their adverſaries were forced to ſee what ſeriouſneſs of ſpirit, meekneſs, tenderneſs and bowels of compaſſion even towards their perſecutors, without bitterneſs and revenge, ſuch did witneſs in thoſe great ſufferings. 5. What rare examples thoſe alſo were, of the reality of holineſs, mortification to the world, and ſubduedneſs to the fleſh, and as a viſible tranſcript in practice of that truth and doctrine of chriſtianity, which they bare witneſs to before men. To give in inſtances to confirm this, is ſome way the more difficult, that they are ſo innumerable, nor can it anſwer here, where I judge it neceſſary to be ſhort, whilſt the Martyrologies of the church are extant. Some few only I cannot well paſs with-

out a brief touch thereat. 1. That remarkable and sweet account, which *Faninus* an *Italian* Martyr, who suffered at *Ferrara* gave to some, as he was going to suffer, who asked at him the reason of such joy and comfort he then witnessed, after so many sharp conflicts he had before, and what now he was to undergo, since his Lord and Master was in such agony before his death; answered, that *Christ had suffered all those conflicts with hell and death that were due to us, being in our room, that we might be freed from the pain and pressure thereof, when called to suffer.* 2. That instance set down at large by Mr. *Fox*, in the book of Martyrs of a faithful and holy minister in *Queen Mary's* time, Mr. *Robert Samuel*, whose cruel usage in the prison was such, that he was chained up to a great post, so that standing only upon one tiptoe, he was fain to bear up the weight of his whole body, and gave him only once a day three mouths-full of bread, and as much water to preserve him more for further torment, than for necessary food; at last, when he was brought forth to be burnt, which was easy, to what he had suffered before; he related to his friends, *That after he had been thus cruelly used, and for some days pinched with hunger and thirst in the greatest extremity, he fell into a sleep, at which time one cloathed all in white seemed to stand before him, who ministred comfort to him, saying*, Samuel, Samuel, *be of good cheer, and take good heart unto you, for after this day, you shall hunger and thirst no more, which accordingly he found come to pass:* Yea, he told them, that he had such wonderful comforts, in those afflictions, imparted from Christ, as he could not in modesty utter the same. During the time of his burning, his body did shine, and looked as bright as new tried silver, to the conviction and astonishment of all that looked on. 3. That notable instance related by *Beza*, and particularly set down in learned *Hottingers* Ecclesiastic History, of one whom *Beza* calls that christian *Scævola*, though a mean country man, who being occasionally present at *Tournay* in *France*, where *Mass* was said by a priest, was so overcome with the zeal of God, and against such horrid idolatry, whilst he was lifting up the *Hostia*, as he went to him, and pulled it out of his hand, throwing it down on the ground, and turning to the people, said, do ye worship such a God as this? Thus being presently taken and sentenced to have his right hand first, and one of his legs to be burnt in the fire, before the rest of his body, when brought to the stake, did most cheerfully hold forth his hand, and suffered the burning of it, without the least visible appearance of pain or shrinking: and after this, cheerfully smiling, suffered also his leg to be put into the flame, saying, *O how blessed a step and way is this, by which I am to enter into eternal life.* After which his whole body being thrown into the fire, he slept in the Lord. 4. I shall here also set down that astonishing example, by the same author at length set down, which was so publick and famous in the year 1550. of *Gabriel Berodinus*, that blessed Martyr, who was burnt at *Cambray*, who a little before had been much taken with fear and horror, whilst a witness to the sufferings of another Martyr, so as upon his being apprehended, did a little shrink in his testimony to the truth, but after through grace got such a recovery, and in that manner strengthned in his soul, as with greatest resolution he choosed to embrace death, yea, in that manner, which was to be burnt alive, rather than to recede in the least from the truth; which his adversaries perceiving, and fearing that his speaking to the multitude at the stake might wrong their cause, did order the executioner to have his tongue cut out: But after, by an extraordinary, yea, miraculous appearance of the Lord, he did not at all cease to speak at freedom, so as he was fully understood, upon which the

the magiſtrate who was then preſent, and had ordered this, did ſeverely accuſe the executioner, as if he had not cut his tongue rightly out, tho' without ground, to whom *Berodinus* anſwered, to the hearing of many, *That that was not in his power, nor is any way poſſible to hinder him to ſpeak, and thus to confeſs the truth.* 5. That Engliſh gentleman *Thomas Haukes*, who for a time had followed the Court, but after the Lord was pleaſed to make himſelf known to him, ſuffered for the truth in *Queen Mary*'s reign, whoſe reſolution and conſtancy is at length ſhewed by Mr. *Fox*, yet wanted not ſometimes a ſhrinking in his thoughts at that torment of the fire. And thereupon being preſſed by ſome of his friends, as he was going to the ſtake, that in the midſt of the flame he would ſhew them ſome token if he could, how it was with him, and if the fire was not ſo intolerable, but that therein one might have his mind kept quiet and patient, which he promiſed, that if the rage of the pain were made eaſy and tolerable, he ſhould lift up his hands above his head before his death, thus with much quiet and patience of ſpirit he addreſſed himſelf to the fire, where after he had continued long, and his ſpeech taken away by the flame, his skin drawn all together, and his fingers conſumed with the fire, ſo as all thought he had been dead, *he gave the fore mentioned ſign, ſuddenly lifting up his hands all burning in a light fire, and with great joy clapt them three times together.* Whereupon there was ſhoutings amongſt the people, eſpecially by thoſe that knew the meaning of it, as the like has ſcarce been heard, and ſo this bleſſed Martyr preſently ſinking down into the fire, gave up his ſpirit unto God, in the year 1555. which could not but enforce a ſtrange amaze upon the adverſary, to ſee what could make ſuch inſufferable pain and torment ſo ſweet and eaſy, as ſome of thoſe, when they were witneſſes to the joy and reſolution of the Proteſtants, when brought to the fire, ſaid it behoved to be from the Devil, who had taken all feeling from them.

SECT. 5. It is ſure, that convincing ſeal and witneſs to the truth of the Reformed Religion can be hid from none of *the oppoſition and contrariety of the ungodly world, and ſpirit thereof to the ſame.* And thus, 1. How ſuch a darkneſs is a witneſs to the light, and the excellency of this bleſſed way may be known by that oppoſition and contrariety of the ſpirit of prophanity, and ungodlineſs thereto. 2 So ſtrange and natural an antipathy in acting thus, as from inward principles might be ſeen, with that perſecuting ſpirit of the popiſh adverſaries to the truth, ſo as they cannot be at reſt, where they have the ſmalleſt acceſs or advantage of power, to purſue thoſe, from whom they are forced to confeſs they had no perſonal injury, or incitement that way. Let any peruſe the moſt impartial records of church hiſtory, in theſe late times, yea, let the moſt indifferent onlookers ſpeak but their conſcience herein, if the moſt leading perſecutors which have ſtill been againſt the Reformed church, have not been as viſibly ſtated in oppoſition to the truth and power of religion. And as *Tertullian* of the primitive times ſpeaks in his apology anent *Nero*. *The truth might boaſt in having ſuch open adverſaries.* 3. Thus was it ſeen by what a ſpirit, ſuch inſtruments were then acted to exerciſe theſe cruelties, and with what fury and impetuous violence, as under ſome viſible force they acted, as it might be truly ſaid of many, they were almoſt diveſted of human ſhape, and viſibly transformed into the image of the Devil. 4. We ſee alſo, when once that great ſtandard of Satans kingdom was ſo remarkably ſet up, for an open war againſt the kingdom of Chriſt, after the Reformation, what a more excellent and invincible ſpirit did then lift a ſtandard againſt this, before which their adverſaries could not ſtand; yea, even in being overcome, how thoſe bleſſed witneſſes to the truth were made

made overcomers. I ſhall but ſet down two inſtances, the one under the *Netherland* perſecution by *Duke de Alva*, of one *John Harwin*, a ſoldier of a moſt diſſolute life, but being once enlightned with the knowledge of the truth, ſo as this change was evident to others, was quickly noticed, and put in priſon, about which the godly in theſe parts were in ſome fear, conſidering his late beginning, and what his former life had been: but he diſappointed all their fears with cleareſt evidence, not only of a ſound judgment, but alſo how he had profited in the ſchool of Chriſt; and when he was condemned, as he went to execution. *Said, ſee here how the wicked world rewardeth the poor ſervants of Chriſt, whilſt I was a drunkard, and player at cards and dice, and living in all diſſoluteneſs and prophanity, I was never then in hazard; but no ſooner began I to ſeek after the truth and a godly life, but preſently the world made war againſt me, and became my enemy, but the ſervant is not better than his Lord.* The other is that famous *paſſage of the Aſſaſination* of John Diazius *a Spaniard*, after he was enlightned by the truth, and at once through grace began to know the Reformed religion, and what it was to be a chriſtian in earneſt; againſt whom his own brother *Alphonſus Diazius* was driven with ſuch a fury, yea in that deliberate manner alſo, as under cover of greateſt affection he did unawares aſſault him, and was the inſtrument of his death, who though by the friendſhip of the *Popiſh* party he was acquited, after he was taken for that fact; yet by the holy judgment of the Lord was forced to be his own executioner.

Sect. 6. *The viſible fall and decreaſe of Satans kingdom before the truth, when once the light of the goſpel after the Reformation broke forth*, may be convincing and clear. 1. That then Satan's binding up and fall did follow from ſuch an open reign, which in former ages he had under the darkneſs of popery, by that prevalence of *ignorance*, *idolatry*, *ſuperſtition* and *perſecution* againſt the truth, over the world. 2. So remarkable a reſtraint which followed of ſuch frequent apparitions, which had been in former times, of ſpirits, giving out that they were in ſouls of perſons departed, and craved help from their friends, of *ſoul-maſſes* for their relief out of *purgatory*. It is, I confeſs, ſtrange and amazing to think what a darkneſs this was, and under what an awe and dread by ſuch an ordinary converſe of the Devil in this manner of his appearance, moſt of the chriſtian world were then; yea upon what authority did the *Romiſh* church lay the greateſt weight of many of their *tenets*, ſuch as *purgatory*, the neceſſity of *ſoul-maſſes*, &c. though nothing more evidently contrary to the ſcripture, which ſhews there can be no return of the ſpirits of ſuch as are departed, nor are to expect another teacher to be ſent to us, than the ſcriptures of truth. But now ſince the breaking forth of the light, it might be clearly ſeen how much theſe are gone, and Satan's power thus under reſtraint, to act that part and deceive the world as formerly, though nothing was more ordinary and frequent in thoſe dark times. 3. It is known now by the goſpel, within the precinct of the church, how remarkably the Devil's power hath been reſtrained, from that familiar converſe which was then under ſuch appearances, as of *Fairies*, and other ſpirits alſo haunting of houſes, ſo as the ceaſing of the heatheniſh *Oracles* did not more diſcernibly follow upon the firſt times of the goſpel, than this reſtraint of evil ſpirits in ſuch ordinary appearances hath followed, even to the conviction of the *popiſh* adverſaries, ſince the late bleſſed Reformation from antichriſtian popery. Many confirming inſtances might be given for this. I ſhall here mention one, which is at large ſet down by Mr. *Fox* and other writers, of that holy and excellent miniſter of Chriſt Mr. *Tindal*, the firſt tranſlator of the ſcripture into *Engliſh* after the Reformation, that being at *Antwerp*, whilſt the perſecution

was

was hot in *England* againſt the truth, he was ſhewed by ſome *Engliſh* merchants there, of a notable *Magician* in the place, whoſe uſe was at feaſts, or when they uſed to meet at ſupper, to bring to the table whatever wines, or delicious fruit the company would deſire, and ſet preſently before them, with other amazing proofs of the power of the Devil. Upon which Mr. *Tindal* perceiving what a ſnare this might be to ſome, deſired, that when they met the next time together with him, he might be preſent, without being known what he was, and after they were met, and at table, this wretched *Magician* after his manner began to try his art, but in vain: for whilſt he had wearied himſelf in following all his ſpells and incantations, and what the furtheſt that helliſh skill and power could do, to ſatisfy the company, he was at laſt enforced to that confeſſion before them all, *There was one of the company hindred his work, by reaſon of whom he could get nothing done at that time.*

Sect. 7. I ſhall further add this great witneſs and atteſtation to the truth of the Reformed religion, to wit by *the ſpirit of holineſs, and how the power of chriſtianity, and love thereof*, did at once break forth with the purity thereof; about which theſe things may be demonſtrably clear. 1. That with the diſcovery of that ſweet and excellent truth of the righteouſneſs of the goſpel, and the doctrine of grace in our being juſtify'd by faith alone in Jeſus Chriſt, (the clear breaking up of which light in theſe laſt times, was as *life from the dead* to the church; after a long and dark night of *Antichriſtianiſm* had gone before to obſcure it. A truth for ſo many ages detained in unrighteouſneſs, that our being juſtify'd is in the accepting of Jeſus Chriſt, as he is offered in the goſpel, and as it is in the caſe of marriage, which conſiſts not in the ſending, or acceping of gifts, but in the accepting of the perſon) how remarkable an enlargement, and out-letting therewith was not only of the peace and comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, but of the ſpirit of holineſs; ſo as the freedom of grace leading into the greateſt tenderneſs in the walk and practice of chriſtians, with that native tendency, which the one hath to the enforcement of the other, did then viſibly appear, yea that marvelous change with a new luſtre and appearance this did put upon the church, with ſuch innumerable and rare examples of holineſs brought forth, who ſhined in that day, in *love*, *humility*, *mortification*, *ſelfdenial*, and *zeal* for the intereſt of Chriſt, to enforce this conviction therewith, that then was the ſpirit given from the Lord to this church, and that *wind did blow upon his garden, when the ſpices thereof did ſend forth ſo ſweet and fragrant a ſcent.* 2. It was then the truth of holineſs, and that this was no perſonated ſhew and appearance, did ſo viſibly appear upon trial, in *preferring Jeſus Chriſt and his truth to the world*, and all intereſts there, when brought in competition with him. It is ſure, no weapon hath been more made uſe of againſt the church, and hath tended to ruin more than this, that whilſt other ſnares had killed their thouſands, of this it may be truly ſaid, it's ten thouſands: but thus the conquering power of Chriſt on the ſpirits of his people had ſuch a ſolemn triumph, as that great cloud of witneſſes, who reſiſted unto blood, chooſing to forſake houſes and enjoyments on the earth, for the truth, may unto this day be a ſtanding witneſs thereto. To give inſtances of ſuch ſhould be unneceſſary, when the whole ſpeaks this forth. I ſhall touch theſe three remarkable examples of ſome who had a great intereſt in the earth to adventure beyond others, and the more rare, becauſe *not many noble*, *not many wiſe*, or of great poſſeſſions here, of whom can be expected ſuch a teſtimony. 1. That famous inſtance of the *Marquiſs of Vico*, *Galleacius Carracciolus*, who a little after the Reformation being one of the moſt natural accompliſhments,

had what the world could desire of outward pleasures, with further expectation of preferment, being the *Pope's* nephew; yet for the truth did quit all, yea wife and children, choosing to live rather in a mean state, and as an exile in *Geneva*, than in all the fulness of those desirable things that *Italy* could afford. Yea upon his parting with his friends and family, when he was put to conflict with so extraordinary assault, with the weeping and cries of his lady and children, had these words, *Let him be accursed that prefers all the pleasures of this world to one hours communion with Jesus Christ.* 2. That choice prince *John Frederick of Saxony*, when detained captive by *Charles* V. *Emperor*, was pressingly importuned to cede a little in the interest of religion, and to embrace that doctrine called the *Interim*, then designed for a reconcilement betwixt Protestants and Papists, by the politicians of that time, yea this with such a bait of having liberty and restitution of his estate; did with that blessed peremptoriness, which is becoming those, whoever knew that power of the love of Christ on their souls, reject all with this return; *Since the Lord had enlightned my spirit by the truth, and knew it assuredly to be such, there was no less terms, whereon I can recede from it than everlasting perishing, and should thus condemn what hitherto I owned and embraced, as the doctrine of Christ; yea even to adventure on the sin against the Holy Ghost. And why do you think I am thus tenacious, to hazard all outward interests for adherence to the truth, but that my study and aim is here, that after this sad and short time of my continuance in the world, I may reach forward unto an eternal life, and to that unexpressible joy that is above. I know by some I am defamed, as if it were not religion, but matter of fame and repute I sought after: but would any think that these could be preferable to me, before my estate, liberty, and enjoyment of wife and children with comfort as formerly, and here before God I bear this witness, and hope to have confidence herein, when I shall be called before his judgment seat, I have had no other aim in my publick actings than this, that keeping close by the truth, and way of the Lord, I might attain that blessed inheritance which is in heaven.* Thus did that blessed *Hero* stand and withstand in such an assault, as *Sleidan* doth at length shew, *lib.* xx. *Pag.* 260. 3. It is worthy of observe also of *Henry*, one of the princes of *Saxony*, to whom his brother *George* one of the *dukes* of that house, having a great principality and estate, but most bitterly *Popish*, sent some ambassadors in time of his sickness, shewing that if he would renounce the Protestant religion, yea that if he would ensure to make no alteration, to prejudge the Popish interest in his territories, he on that condition would make him heir of all, otherwise had by *Testament* disponed the same unto *Cæsar* and *Ferdinand* his brother. To whom this prince gave this answer; *This is such a tentation, as Satan had against Christ, fall down and worship me, and I will give thee all these things. But think ye that I would forsake the known truth and purity of religion for riches?* Nay, he dismissed them with a most peremptory refusal; but e'er these ambassadors were returned to their prince, he was departed, and *Henry* went immediately and entred into possession of that estate, and restored the Reformed religion there. 3. *These deep soul exercises, brokeness of spirit, yea the terrors of the law* in greatest earnest pressing down the souls of many christians then, with that sweet result after in a solid serenity and peace, yea tenderness of walk under their death, may convincingly witness that weight and power of the truth of godliness such were under. It is true, the Lord was graciously pleased to keep this much off the spirits of his suffering witnesses, who were then called forth to witness even unto death for the truth: and it might be seen, what a sun-shine of unexpressible joy

and light, they were then kept in, amidſt thoſe ſharp aſſaults; but after the extremity of perſecution had ſome abatement, then were thoſe inward conflicts more frequent. Inſtances have been ſo known, as I judge it not needful to ſpeak much therein. Two paſſages only I muſt touch. One of that rare *Engliſh* gentleman Mr. *John Glover*, who ſuffered, and was in hazard from the Popiſh party, yet not unto death; which is the more remarkable, that his brother Mr. *Robert Glover*, who was burnt at a ſtake for the truth, was not in that manner tried. I ſhall ſhall ſet down Mr. *Fox*'s own words in the *book of Martyrs* of him. *I was twice or thrice with him, whom partly by his talk I perceived, partly with my eyes I ſaw to be ſo worn and conſumed by the ſpace of five years, that neither almoſt enjoying of meat, quiet of ſleep, pleaſure of his life, was left him, ſo that if it had not pleaſed Chriſt ſometime to have relieved his poor ſervant, ſo far worn, with ſome ſeaſonable comforts now and then betwixt times, it had been impoſſible for him to ſuſtain ſuch torments, the chief cauſe whereof was, that having been graciouſly called by the light of the goſpel, and felt wondrous taſtes of Chriſt's heavenly kingdom, upon ſome declining of his heart after the world, he was affrighted with that text,* Heb. vi. 4. *of having ſinned againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which ſo wrought upon him, that if he had been in hell, he could not have more deſpaired of his ſalvation. In this his intolerable anguiſh, though he had no joy in his meat, yet was he forced to eat againſt his appetite, that he might thus defer the time, as long as could be, of his damnation. But though he ſuffered many years ſuch ſad temptations and ſtrong buffetings of Satan, yet the Lord, who graciouſly preſerved him all that while, did at laſt not only free him thereof, but alſo framed him thereby, as he being like one already placed in heaven, and dead to this world, both in words and affections, led a life wholly celeſtial, abhorring all prophane doings, his diſcourſe and words being always ſuitable thereto.* 2. I ſhall add here that known and rare inſtance alſo of Mrs. *Catharine Brettergh*, who lived in *Lancaſhire*, as her life and death, which is at length ſet forth by it ſelf, ſhews what a ſingular, grave and ſolid chriſtian ſhe was, to the conviction not of a few, but of the place and country where ſhe lived, but ſome ſhort time before the Lord called her to himſelf, was exerciſed with ſuch ſtrange inward terrors upon her ſpirit, as all might diſcern, not by her cries and complaints only, (though otherwiſe in greateſt compoſure of mind) that ſhe was forſaken of the Lord, but to the affecting her body, bringing it low, ſometimes the ſweat burſting out upon her, ſo that all might ſee what that preſſure and pain was, which ſhe had within: the riſe whereof was her apprehended hypocriſy, wanting of that ſerioufneſs, and being ſuitably earneſt in embracing of religion; yea that ſhe had not ſo glorified the Lord, eſpecially with her tongue, nor had that ſincere love to him that ſhe ought. Her conflict and terror continued a conſiderable time, ſome of the moſt ſolid and grave miniſters of that country being oft with her, but at laſt, that bleſſed victory and triumph ſhe got was no leſs marvelous, after the Lord did break in with light, and diſcoveries of himſelf. Some of thoſe expreſſions ſhe then had of her comforts, I ſhall but in a ſhort touch here mention, with which ſhe was ſometimes forced to burſt out: *O the joys, the joys, the joys that I feel in my ſoul! O they be wonderful, they be wonderful! The place where I now am is ſweet and pleaſant, how comfortable is the ſweetneſs I feel, that delights my ſoul? The taſte is precious, do you not feel it? Oh ſo ſweet as it is! And at other times, O my ſweet Saviour ſhall I be one with thee, as thou art one with the Father? And doſt thou ſo love me that am but duſt, to make me partaker of glory with Chriſt? O how wonderful is thy love! And oh that my tongue and heart*

were

were able to ſound forth thy praiſes, as I ought. At another time ſhe burſt forth thus; yea Lord I feel thy mercy, and I am aſſured of thy Love, and ſo certain am I thereof as thou art that God of truth, even ſo certainly do I know my ſelf to be thine. O Lord my God, and this my ſoul knoweth right well, which laſt words ſhe again doubled. To a grave miniſter one Mr. Harriſon *then with her, ſhe ſaid, my ſoul hath been compaſſed with the terrors of death, the ſorrows of hell were upon me, and a wilderneſs of woe was in me, but bleſſed, bleſſed, bleſſed be the Lord my God, he hath brought me to a place of reſt, even to the ſweet running waters of life. The way I now go in is a ſweet and eaſy way, ſtrowed with flowers, he hath brought me to a place more ſweet than the garden of* Eden, *O the joy, the joy, the delights and joy that I feel, O how wonderful? And as her ſtrength began to fail her, with a ſweet countenance and ſtill voice ſaid, my warfare is accompliſhed, and my iniquities are pardoned, whom have I in heaven but thee,* &c. This inſtance I chooſe the more to ſet down, that ſeveral of the *popiſh* party in that country then, did object this againſt the *proteſtant* religigion, that it had ſuch ſoul terrors following the ſame, but it is not ſtrange, for ſuch as are ſtrangers to the ſcripture, to the life of the ſaints there, to the truth of holineſs on their own ſoul, that this is beyond their reach, or underſtanding. Yea a wounded ſpirit with thoſe great realities of the joy and conſolation of God, by a touch of the bleſſed healers hand, is no ſhew, but found to be in greateſt earneſt, though he does not in like manner or meaſure, thus deal with his people. Here I muſt add a paſſage of one of the moſt grave, judicious and holy miniſters of Chriſt I knew in the age he lived in, that having been moſt of the day before in fellowſhip with ſome chriſtians, who were under rare and deep exerciſe of mind. He lay down at night in ſome heavineſs, and much troubled that he knew not ſuch by experience as thoſe were, but that night in the midſt of his ſleep, he ſaid (I ſhall ſet down his own words from himſelf, who now is in glory.) 'There came upon me ſuch a ter-
'ror of the wrath of God, that if it had increaſed a ſmall degree higher, or
'continued a minute longer than it did, I had been in as dreadful a condition as
'ever living man was in: but it was inſtantly removed,' and then he had a voice ſpoke to him within his heart and ſaid. 'See what a fool thou art, to
'deſire the thing thou couldeſt not endure, and which he thought ſtrange alſo,
'that neither the horror, nor the relief he had out of it, did then awake him
'out of his ſleep till the morning, but the weight and impreſſion of it remained
'for a conſiderable time thereafter.' 4. It may be evident, not only in thoſe ſuffering times of the church ſince the Reformation, but to this very day, that majeſty and authority, doth attend *holineſs*, ſo as to enforce an awe, and reſpect on the conſcience even of the haters thereof, and their being ſtruck with the conviction of a more excellent ſpirit in ſuch (whoſe zeal and cloſe adherence to the Reformed religion hath been alſo moſt diſcernible) than that ſpirit which is of the world, yea how viſibly thoſe did move in an higher ſphere and from other principles than upon any outward intereſt, and that it was an undoubted product of the ſpirit of God. This was ſo convincing after the Reformation to the adverſaries themſelves, that many judged it their intereſt to have ſufferings of *Proteſtants* leſs publick and obvious, ſince their deport enforced an awful conviction upon all, that aſſuredly God was with them; nor hath there any time ſince been wanting moſt obſervable inſtances to confirm this. I remember amongſt other remarks of the church in *Ireland*, a little time before the rebellion there, I had from a great miniſter of Chriſt, who was moſt inſtrumental in the work of the Lord there, that as he did not think there were more lively and experienced chriſtians any where, than were at that time there,

there, and these not a few: but in a large number, and severals of them persons of considerable outward state in the world, who were then brought in by the gospel, most of whom before that change, had been most ignorant and prophane: how such likewise was their convincing and tender walk, as they were generally reverenced by the graceless multitude, yea, on whose conscience was enforced an awful regard of the truth of holiness, that was so convincingly witnessed in their practice. And then also (which was observeable) how almost no jar, or jealously was to be found, either amongst ministers or private christians there: But their great contention was to prefer others to themselves, and in those days it was sweet and easy for ministers to preach and pray both in publick and private, such was the hunger of their hearers, their food being remarkably let out to so large a desire and appetite.

CHAP. V.

SECT. 1. BEsides that which hath been shewed in the preceeding chapter of those great *confirmations put to the protestant cause* and doctrine of the Reformed churches in these latter times, yea, thus also to the truth of christianity, it being sure the Protestant religion is nothing else but this, in the truth and purity thereof. It may be further strengthning, and a sweet remark, in this sad and shaking time, to consider with what brightness and lustre so many have gone off the stage, of such as have been most serious and fervent in the Reformed Religion in these after times, since that great fury and persecution from Antichrist hath been restrained; whose unexpressible peace and joy with some extraordinary glances then of that blessed estate they were entering into, could possibly be hid from none, even most ordinary onlookers, and with these convincing evidences thereof. 1. Of that complacency and joy their souls had in the truth they had professed, and their finding the witness of their conscience, and the approbation of God herein so sweet a feast, whilst they were then turning their face to the wall, as it might be seen that inward joy and peace did thus far exceed their outward pain, and more sensible to them than their sickness. 2. That surely the ground on which such a confidence and serenity of spirit was founded, must be some thing above nature, and such as was able to bear out under the greatest storm and assault, as all might see, here could be no naked shew or counterfeit. 3. That thus even here, a more near and sensible correspondence with heaven is known to some, than most seem to be aware of; yea, such as (except men shut their eyes) it might be easy to discern, how these when dying have had the vail in an extraordinary manner drawn by, and been admitted to some sight of that, which themselves could not possibly express, and to know something of an actual possession, and those foretastes of the glory they were entering into, than can be conceived at a distance. 4. How discernibly this abundant entrance, and fulness of peace, enjoyed in the dying hours of the saints hath followed their close adherence to the way of the Lord, and the Protestant doctrine now under such reproach. It is true, that not in a like manner is the Lord's dealing with the choicest of his people, but such who have shined brightly in their day may go off the stage silent and with little appearance. I have known some, of whom I write this with the greatest certainty, how their continued walk and practice did speak to all, the truth of serious godliness, the blessed finishing of whose course hath some discernible restraint as to any such appearance then, whilst the Lord's condescending with such a visible gale of sense, and triumphing joy to others in the close of their life, may be understood more with respect to some publick use and import, than for themselves, as a dying

teſtimony and ſeal of the ſaints to the truth. And I hope this may be for advantage and edification to ſet down here ſome ſpecial and weighty *Inſtances* to commend the bleſſed way of the Lord, and for confirming others therein; whoſe laſt teſtament and dying breath, (whilſt their words are of more weight than at other times) did ſolemnly witneſs to his truth and faithfulneſs, by putting their ſeal thereto: Yea, ſuch inſtances as the world may ſee, and have the conviction hereof enforced by this ſhort touch, what is that bleſſed fruit and gain, which follows upon ſerious godlineſs, when once it comes to an acting the laſt ſcene of death; what another appearance theſe have, and that here muſt be ſomething above nature, yea, what rare endowments and parts theſe had, as well as piety, who with ſuch ſweet and odoriferous fragrancy have their remembrance thus tranſmitted; that we may ſee alſo what choice and excellent perſons have followed, and been brought forth ſince the Reformation from Popery, of ſuch various degrees and employments, bearing one and the ſame witneſs to the truth. Some of which I have chooſed to inſert here, are out of *Melchior Adamus*, a grave writer, being in the *Latin*, and theſe books ſo rare, as might be little known or acceſſible to the moſt, for theſe other paſſages which follow, I may with confidence ſay, I have been to the furtheſt concerned anent the certainty thereof, as ſhall be more particularly ſhewed.

Sect. 2. Firſt inſtance ſet down, is of that notable *German* phyſician *Joachimus Curæus* born in *Frankſtadt*, who died *Anno* 1573 a man, as of choice and ſingular piety, was of great learning alſo, had his days ſhortned by a burning fever, in which as in the whole of his former life, did appear the ſubjectedneſs of his ſoul, yet with moſt fervent breathings of love towards Chriſt (and as its uſually found) a moſt ſweet concord here betwixt the concluſion and premiſes of his former walk and practice, amongſt many remarkable ſpeeches he then had, and are at length recorded by *Melchior Adamus*, theſe I ſhall here mention. *I am oppreſſed Lord, but to me it is enough, that thy hand hath done it, my body now ſuffers becauſe of ſin, but my ſoul is raiſed and comforted with the aſſurance of eternal life: but I will wreſtle with* Jacob, *until the brightneſs of thy light appear to me. Come Lord Jeſus, and let all that love thee ſay come, and he that loves thee not, let him be* Anathema Maranatha. *Thou knoweſt who ſearcheſt the heart, I love thee, with thee I ſhall be at the beginning of this new year, and ſatisfied with thy ſight, and drink of the wine of that everlaſting joy in thy father's houſe, where there are many manſions, and one alſo is for me there.* And then had theſe words, which I chooſe rather to ſet down in the *Latin*, having ſuch a ſweet *emphaſis* there. *Jam meum pectus ardet conſpectu vitæ æternæ, cujus, verè ſentio, in me, initia.* 'I have learned to know thee, and with 'ſome aim to have others know thee aright, Son of God, acknowledge me 'alſo and take me into thy embracements. To come to thee, my ſoul with 'deſire leaps for joy, and becauſe it is yet with-held, I think the time long; 'I deſire to be diſſolved. O diſſolve me, that I may be with thee, I am over 'wearied here, I groan for that dwelling above, which thou haſt revealed to 'me as the traveling man in a dark night looks for the Sun, ſo do I earneſtly look after the brightneſs of that light, which is in the ſight of the Father, 'Son and Holy Ghoſt. Now when my breath and ſpirits are to fail, let O 'bleſſed Saviour, thy ſpirit ſpeak and interceed in my ſoul for me, with unutterable groans. I ſhall ſee my Saviour in the fleſh, who is exalted at the 'right hand of the Father, and there bleſs him for all the bleſſings I have had 'from him. Thou wilt alſo put a guard to this body, even thy holy angels 'to keep my duſt and bones, which were and ſhall be for ever the dwelling

'place of the Holy Ghoſt; for it is impoſſible this fleſh and maſs of my 'body, which hath been quickned by the outletting and communion of the 'ſpirit, and thus ingrafted into the body of Chriſt, to be annihilate, or to 'be for ever continued in the ſtate of death, as a dead maſs: but thou the 'fountain of life ſhalt require from the earth this thine own image, even 'out of the ſmalleſt crumbs of duſt and aſhes that are there; and by ſend-'ing forth thy ſpirit again, build up this as a glorious and living body, that 'it may be for a dwelling for thy Divinity to dwell in for ever. There we 'ſhall follow the Lamb where ever he goes. With theſe words which he 'adds, *O verè pulchrum, Ducem & Divinum.* There we ſhall ſing a new 'ſong. Let us rejoice, Hallelujah. O come let us go forth to meet our Re-'deemer. Our converſation is in Heaven; but even in this life we muſt be-'gin to know an eternal life, and follow in that order Chriſt hath appointed. 'We ſhall be cloathed upon, and not found naked; and he who is the be-'loved Lamb of God, who takes away the ſins of the world, ſhall lead us 'to the fountains of living water, and take all tears from our eyes. What 'the eye hath not ſeen, nor the ear heard, nor hath entered into the hearts 'of men, is prepared for the lovers of God. This earthly life is but death: 'but that is life indeed, which Chriſt hath begun in my ſoul; and now I 'live, not I but Chriſt liveth in me, therefore I will praiſe him, O bleſſed ſoul 'where Jeſus Chriſt hath his ſeat, who doth lead and rule in all our motions 'and actions, I ſee the Heavens now open. Now let thy ſervant depart in 'peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation. Thou Jeſus Chriſt art my 'reſurrection and life. How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Redeemer? Keep 'my ſoul that it ſuffer not hurt from that horrible Dragon the Devil, let it be 'bound up in the bundle of the living, and my journey be to thoſe who 'now live an immortal and heavenly life. Thus is there in part a touch of the breathings of that bleſſed man before his cloſe, which the witneſſes thereof ſhew was but ſome part of what he expreſſed, and this with greateſt candour and fervency. And ſaid again a little before his cloſe: *I die in the Lord, who is my life, and in the acknowledgment, faith and recumbence on Jeſus Chriſt. O ſweet glory and deſirable righteouſneſs! O pleaſant change and tranſlation from ſin, into a ſtate of holineſs, from darkneſs into light, and from death into life!* It was obſerved that he had diverſe words prophetical, whereof many choice and faithful witneſſes were then preſent, who declared alſo that they were exceedingly comforted by him; but needed not comfort him, in whom ſo ſingular a deſire and breathing towards eternal life, with ſuch eſtabliſhment in the faith was diſcernible to all, and thus at the cloſe he was heard ſay, *Now I die, and have got admiſſion, as with old* Simeon; *I die witneſſing to the truth of the prophets and apoſtles, and adhering to the* Auguſtan Confeſſion, *bleſſing the Lord that in his marvelous goodneſs, had the light of the goſpel to return after ſuch darkneſs.*

Sect. 3. *Sebaldus Munſterus*, one excellently verſed in the laws, who made it his ſtudy to have his knowledge therein ſubſervient to the publick good, and making peace amongſt others, not his own private intereſt. At his death he ſhewed much patience, being ſeized on by the plague, and a few hours before his cloſe, ſhewing to ſome friends about him theſe dreadful marks of the diſeaſe, that were broke forth in his hands and legs, ſaith to them, *O what precious marks are thoſe which Chriſt hath put upon me, and how pleaſing are they? Do not you loath at ſuch a ſight, for I am now putting on my wedding apparel, for as loathſome as it is, whither I am going to enjoy that heavenly feaſt with Chriſt for ever, yea even in this ſad*

dreſs

dreſs do I ſit to that glorious aſſembly of the ſpirits of the juſt above. Thus as it were triumphing, and full of joy he left the world, when he had got a clear ſight of that which was before him. *Ibat ovans animâ; & ſpe ſua damna levabat.* He died at *Wittenberg* about the year 1540.

SECT. 4. *Franciſcus Burgardus* a *German* lawyer, and fervent proteſtant alſo, moſt dear to *Luther* and *Melanchthon*, both for his ſingular learning and piety, of whom that account is given, that his family did repreſent both a Church and Academy, ſo as it may be queſtioned whether ſerious piety, with prudence and great judgment did moſt ſhine forth? Was heard oft to expreſs upon the complaints of ſome, what hazard then ſeemed to attend the truth, that he much rather would chooſe death, and the greateſt of ſufferings, than in the ſmalleſt point recede herein; about which he was perſuaded in his heart. At his death did thus alſo expreſs himſelf, when his ſickneſs was very ſore. *I eſteem the afflictions of this preſent time, not to be compared with the glory, which ſhall be revealed in us, and though I ſhall now walk in the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will not fear, ſince thou art with me, whoſe rod and ſtaff have comforted me.* And with ſtrongeſt aſſurance of eternal bleſſedneſs did thus part with time at *Wittenberg* 1560.

SECT. 5. *Joannes Clotzius*, counſellor of law to the *Landgrave* of *Heſſen*, and after by him made his chancellor, though with great averſion thereto, as reckoning that the greater dignity had moſt weighty cares, and trouble following the ſame. One ſeriouſly godly in his life, at death had theſe expreſſions: *The whole of my life is placed in God. O let thy ſervant depart in peace. Thou art my ſure anchor, my ſalvation, and only refuge to me. Now the honours of the world, and all momentary things, yea, this life it ſelf is diſtaſteful, in reſpect of thoſe eternal joys, and that kingdom above, to which I breath, and with joyful mind haſten, even where thoſe many manſions are.* And thus moſt comfortably rendred his ſpirit to the Lord.

SECT. 6. *Joachimus Bergerus*, a famous lawyer and counſellor to the *Emperor Maximilian*, by whom he was ſometimes ſent in embaſſy to other princes, whom *Melanchthon* did ſo much admire, as he expreſſeth his fervent deſires, that the Lord would preſerve ſuch an inſtrument for his church, of whom that account is given. His religion was a ſoul-work and buſineſs to him, nor did he ſatisfy himſelf with a form of duty, but oft might be ſeen pouring out his heart unto God in prayer, with many tears in his family, a rare inſtance of one in ſuch throng of publick employments. He was much in converſe with the ſcripture, not to know it only for light, but to conform himſelf thereto, as the rule. He uſed to have theſe words frequently to others, That ones time ſhould be much, either in ſpeaking with God by Prayer, or have him ſpeaking to us, by reading and meditation, which he had drunk in from his youth: Of ſingular humility, as a few weeks before his death, he declared, *That beſides ſome deſire to renounce the world; he deſigned to die a capital enemy, above all things to that ſin of pride.* And whilſt on his death bed with greateſt aſſurance he looked out for his change, uſing theſe words of *Job, I will wait till my change come*, as one who ſeemed to have no more to do then, but to die, having been ſo ſerious in making ready for it in his former life. This account is given of his words. *Though I be moſt weak and deſtitute of outward help, I am one of the ſheep of Chriſt, whom Satan by all his power ſhall never be able to pluck out of his hand: and was ſure that no created thing could ever be able to pluck out of his hand: and was ſure that nothing could ever be able to ſeparate him from the love of Chriſt, with which he was ſo firmly united. He had that word as moſt comforting to him.*

He

He is my life, and the length of my days, Deut. xxx. 20. And then after ſaid, *Farewell, O farewell all earthly things, and welcome heaven. Let none hereafter make mention of the things of this world to me.* And to ſome of his friends, who were by, did ſeriouſly witneſs, *he never through the bleſſing of God was more firmly perſuaded of the truth, nor had ever found the ſpirit of the Lord bearing a more full and comforting teſtimony to his ſoul for his adherence to the truth, than at that preſent time, ſo as now he found it eaſy, and was in caſe, if he were called thereto, to lay down his life as a martyr upon that account, which was not eaſy to him before, and withal witneſſed his inward joy, and ſenſe of the Lord's tenderneſs to him at ſuch a time, to diſmiſs him out of this priſon, when ſo dreadful things ſeemed eminent upon the country and place he lived in.* Thus died that excellent man, leaving a ſweet ſavour behind to all who knew him, *Anno* 1602.

Sect. 7. *Gaſpar Peucerus,* ſon-in-law to *Melanchthon,* and a moſt famous phyſician in that time, was a man of great learning and piety, and in the bleſſed diſpoſal of the Lord expoſed to much ſuffering upon the ſacramental controverſy with the *Lutherans,* which how ſad ſoever to him in the time, did at laſt reſolve in much joy, and being ſtrengthned in the way of the Lord thereby. He was kept for many years in priſon on that account, where he was forced to ſee his profiting more in the knowledge and love of the truth, than in all his former liberty; having been of an high and lofty ſpirit until thus he was under the croſs broken and ſubdued, ſo as he bare that teſtimony, *It was good for him, the Lord had afflicted him.* In his priſon he met with hard uſage, and expecting his change by death, his body being ſpent and brought very low, he wrote his teſtament as is at large (and truly edifying) the account thereof ſet down by *Melchior Adamus,* where he owns the innocency of his cauſe, exhorts his children to godlineſs, and love amongſt themſelves, having amongſt others theſe words, as an enforcement from his own practice: *I commend my ſoul, and the whole of me, with daily groanings to God, through, and for his Son Jeſus Chriſt my Lord, in confeſſing of whom by the help of his ſpirit, I hope to continue, live and die, waiting for the coming of our great God our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt,* ſhews alſo, that during his impriſonment with bleſſing the Lord for it, how he had been kept ſtill unmoved, with all their threatnings of death, or continued reſtraint. And when he called to mind the death of his choice wife, from whom he was kept, ſo as he could not have acceſs to ſee her at her death, which affected him with much grief, he ſaid, the conſidering of theſe words of *Chriſt, that he who forſakes not father and mother, wife and children for his ſake, is not worthy of him,* did much help to ſubdue, and bound his affections herein: he after experienced the Lord's marvelous providence, both in his delivery and comfort of his after lot. Outliving theſe ſufferings ſixteen years, and attained to greater honour and reſpect than ever before, ſo as he could ſeal the verification of that truth, *of the Lords making glad his people according to the days wherein he had afflicted them, and years wherein they had ſeen evil.* He died *Anno* 1602. with a moſt ſweet refreſhing teſtimony to all preſent, of his aſſured hope and comfort in the Lord.

Sect. 8. *Fredericus Taubmannus* born *Anno* 1565. was a man of great learning and piety, which made him to be an ornament to the profeſſion of the truth in the place and time he lived; was alſo much exerciſed for confirming himſelf in the way of God, not only in the publick hearing of the word, but in thoſe more ſecret duties, reading, meditation and fervent prayer. He had ſome clear diſcerning of his approaching death, whereupon he ſaid to his friends, *This I do not fear, let my God call when he will, I de-*

ſire to obey, I know he will never forſake me. And under his ſickneſs, when it came upon him, and whilſt his diſeaſe began to increaſe, to ſome then who were exhorting him to patience, he ſaid, *God is faithful, whom I have before now tried, and at this hour have no cauſe to bring his truth into queſtion. Let his bleſſed will concerning me take place.* In the evening before his death, being asked what he was doing, he anſwered. *I ly here, I am wreſtling with my Lord Jeſus Chriſt after* Jacob's *example, and reſolve not to let him go, till he give the bleſſing.*

SECT. 9. *Matthias Veſſenbechius*, famous for learning and knowledge of the laws, which was his profeſſion, a fervent Proteſtant, and remarkably called to the knowledge of the truth, when he ſtudied at the *Univerſity* of *Lovaine*, by being a witneſs to the ſufferings of a poor godly man in that place for the truth, which put him after to a ſerious ſearch of the ſcripture; had a marvelous delight in a ſpecial way to read much of the *Pſalms*, and upon the *New Teſtament:* a great oppoſer of the litigious wranglings of the law, and to have truth and righteouſneſs in that employment promoted. At his death did witneſs much peace and comfort, having oft in his mouth theſe words of the apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* i. 22. *Who hath confirmed us, and given us the ſeal of the ſpirit*, by which we cry *Abba Father*, and that in *Rom.* vii. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?* Adding the following words as his confidence, that this was enſured through Jeſus Chriſt, he ſaid alſo to thoſe that were preſent with great aſſurance, *That now the Lord had given him a ſight of that bleſſed place of eternal joy, and where he would be quickly, which was his greateſt longing to have it haſtned.* And with his laſt breathing almoſt, had theſe words. *He was within the covenant with Jeſus Chriſt.* He died *Anno* 1556. Profeſſor of the law at *Wittenberg*.

SECT. 10. *Jacobus Zunigerus*, a famous *German* profeſſor of medicine at *Baſil*, and ornament not only to the Univerſity, and his Profeſſion as a Phyſician, but to the truth in a moſt convincing chriſtian walk, was plucked away in the time of a great peſtilence, which was at *Baſil*, whilſt he made it his work to be uſeful at that time to others. The firſt touch of his diſeaſe was quickly diſcerned by him, and that his change would quickly follow upon it, ſo as his buſineſs was wholly anent his inward ſtate. And as one panting after a better life, had once and again theſe words to his friends. *I rejoice, yea, my ſpirit leaps within me for joy, that now the time is at laſt come, when I ſhall ſee the glorious God face to face, whoſe glory with wondering I have oft got ſome glance of here, in the ſearch of natural things, whom I have worſhipped, whom I have by faith longed after, and after whom my ſoul hath panted.* And whilſt his pain through the malignity of the diſeaſe was very grievous, he did expreſs greateſt patience and compoſure of ſpirit, having theſe words of *Job. Though he ſhould kill me, I will truſt in him*, and only did often groan forth his deſire, that Jeſus Chriſt would come and haſten his eſcape, ſo as all who look'd on, might ſee him dying, and overcoming in ſuch a ſharp conflict at once. He died *Anno* 1610.

SECT. 11. *Olympia Fulvia Morata*, an *Italian* born at *Ferrara*, and bred at the court there, with the young Princeſs, who was the Duke's daughter, of a ſingular ſpirit for learning, beſides her other excellent endowments, ſo as ſhe could both write and ſpeak moſt elegant *Latin* and *Greek* in her very young years. But then by reaſon of her education, and the place of her abode, wholly popiſh, was at laſt bereſt of her father, who had a publick charge under the Duke there, with ſome viſible with-drawing after, of that wonted reſpect ſhe had in that court. In the bleſſed providence of the Lord

for her good, though upon the account given of her life, ſhe was ſuch a perſon as enforced a conviction upon all that knew her, not only of excellent natural endowments, but of her modeſt, prudent and vertuous deportment in the place ſhe lived, which through the good hand of the Lord did occaſion a learned *German* phyſician then at *Ferrara*, a ſerious Proteſtant, to propoſe marriage with her, and this was the occaſion of her withdrawing from that country, and to leave her father's houſe. Her husband with whom ſhe was then engaged, returning within a little to his own country, where ſhe gave her ſelf moſt to ſtudy the ſcripture, to which before ſhe was wholly a ſtranger, and had accounted it hazardous to converſe with, the Lord thus breaking in upon her with the light and knowledge of the truth, that in the ſhort time of her life after, it was not only the Proteſtant Religion ſhe then embraced; but in greateſt earneſt followed the power and truth thereof: ſo as only her delight and comfort was in converſe with divine things. In a letter ſhe writes to that *young Princeſs*, with whom ſhe was bred at *Ferrara*, which among ſome other things ſhe had writ, was after her death publiſhed. She hath theſe words: *So ſoon as by the ſingular goodneſs of the Lord to me, I had got out from the idolatry of my own country, and gone with my husband to* Germany, *it may ſeem incredible to you, what a change the Lord then made upon my ſpirit, that the former averſion I had to read the ſcripture, from which I had kept at ſo great a diſtance, was then turned to have this my greateſt delight and pleaſure in the world, and now my ſoul is moſt taken up therewith: And there I may ſay is my only comfort and pleaſure, about which my ſtudy, work and care I have placed; ſo as the world and the pleaſure and delights therein, which once I was wont to admire, and too much taken with, are become wholly contemptible with me.* That ſhort time of her abode with her husband in *Germany* before her death, was almoſt a continued conflict with renewed trials they met with in their private lot, being toſſed from ſeveral places by reaſon of the wars, her husband taken by ſome Popiſh ſoldiers, and in much hazard of his life, which was one of the ſharpeſt conflicts ſhe had in her time, upon any outward account; there being very great love betwixt them; ſo as for a little ſhe was almoſt cruſhed: but the Lord who heard her groans, by a remarkable providence, returned him ſafe. Thus did he graciouſly try and exerciſe this choice perſon ſo early, after her being enlightned, with the croſs, yea, and thus further, to gain her ſoul to himſelf, that her fervency in following the Lord was no leſs remarkable, than theſe toſſings of her life were. But at laſt a bleſſed period comes to all, having ſettled with her husband at *Heidleberg*, where they had ſome lucid and comfortable interval. She takes ſickneſs, which in a few days brought her to the grave, but with greateſt advantage in her inward caſe, as is ſet down at length by her huſband under his own hand, whom he ſaith, with greateſt deſire longed for her departure, and witneſſed her comfort and joy herein, that now the time was come, when ſhe had ſo remarkably experienced, to enjoy that bleſſedneſs which is above. Nothing ſhe could worſe bear, than to hear of any preſages of her recovery; and ſaid to her friends: *The Lord had been pleaſed to give her a ſhort courſe, but full of toſſings and trouble, and now could no more deſire to return again, when ſo near the port.* She was asked by ſome, if there was now any heſitation in her ſoul anent her ſtate, and what peace ſhe had there anent to whom ſhe anſwered thus. *For theſe ſeven years before, which was ſince the time of my being engaged to the Lord in embracing the truth, I had ſeldom any ceſſation from ſome aſſault or other of the Devil, to ſhake my faith, and weaken my hands anent the truth: But now, as if he had loſt all his darts, he appears no more this way: Nor*

feel

feel I in my ſoul any thing, but unexpreſſible tranquility and peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt. Nor did ſhe doubt in the leaſt to call her ſelf one of the children of God. And a little before her cloſe, having awaked out of ſleep, ſhe ſeemed to her husband to look in an extraordinary manner, with a cheerful countenance, which made him ask the cauſe, to whom ſhe ſaid, *I have now got a ſight in my reſt, of a moſt excellent and pleaſant place, ſhining with an unexpreſſible light and brightneſs.* But her weakneſs was ſuch, as ſhe could get no more at preſent ſpoken. Her husband being much affected, told her ſhe had indeed cauſe of cheerfulneſs, ſince it was ſure ſhe ſhould now within a little ſpace dwell in that pleaſant and deſirable place, of which ſhe had got ſuch a ſight. To whom with a moſt ſweet and comfortable ſmile ſhe could only ſay, *Tota* (inquit) *ſum læta. I am full of joy; but now I know you no more.* Thus did that ſweet ſoul render up her ſpirit, who had through moſt of her ſickneſs oft theſe words: That her ſole deſire was to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, and ſo far as her weakneſs could permit, did expreſs to others her ſenſe of the marvelous goodneſs of the Lord, in bringing her from her own country, his enlightning her with the knowledge of his truth, and that he had taken her heart off the world, and from all the pleaſures and delights thereof, and wrought in her ſo ardent a deſire after eternal life, about which ſhe had then no fear. Theſe were but a few, as her husband relates, of what in that time ſhe expreſt, to the comfort and wondering of all about her. She died at *Heidlebergh* in the year 1555. in the twenty ninth year of her age. This inſtance not only is at length ſet down by *Melchior Adamus*, having the account thereof from her own husband, as he had writ it after her death, but I find the ſame particularly mentioned by famous *Voetius*.

Sect. 12. Having mentioned in the preceeding ſection that rare example of piety, whom the Lord did thus marvelouſly reſcue from the darkneſs of Antichriſtian Popery under which ſhe lived; it may not be unſuitable, and I hope for edification, to join ſuch an obſervable inſtance therewith, of the converſion of a *Lady*, in our own country, now ſeveral years ago, from Popery, who not only from her education, but with ſome ſerious and conſcientious reſpect, before ſhe was enlightned by the truth, did own the profeſſion of that way. The account ſet down is of her own words tranſcribed, which with much aſſurance I can here inſert; yea, who after her converſion, until the Lord's calling her to himſelf did confirm the truth thereof, by convincing and exemplary piety, to all that knew her. ‘ I have changed no good thing ‘ I had before: but what I then in appearance had, I labour to have it in ‘ truth now. I did ever believe the Articles of the Creed, and now believe ‘ to be ſaved by the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, and no other way, that true faith ‘ muſt bring forth the fruits of repentance, and good works, elſe that faith is ‘ but dead and counterfeit. This change upon me, neither I, nor any creature ‘ in the world made, but the Lord himſelf within me: For I ſtrove againſt ‘ it all I could, till he let me know that it was himſelf dealing within me: ‘ And I now perceive had a work in me from the beginning, though I then ‘ knew it not. I had ſtill a love to the truth, and earneſt deſire to know ‘ God, and ſtudied according to my knowledge to do what might pleaſe him ‘ and durſt not follow, but made ſome conſcience to ſhun what I judged ‘ wrong. This now I know was the beginning of the Lord's work with me: ‘ My love to his ſervice, and that deſire I had to be ſaved, which made me ‘ piece and piece to ſearch out the grounds of that religion I profeſt: And ‘ when other means failed, gave my ſelf to reading of books, chooſing ‘ rather to be under that challenge of curioſity, (for ſo it was accounted)

‘ than

'than to be careleſs of my own ſalvation: Yea, it became my pleaſure above 'all things in the earth, to know what might further me to heaven; ſo as 'I could have been ſatisfied. (If the Lord had thought fit) to have renounced 'all the honour and pleaſure of this world, for time and occaſion to uſe thoſe 'means which might help me to heaven: but when I got underſtanding of 'the grounds of that religion I profeſſed, and my teachers accounted ſufficient, 'could find no true comfort there, nor how any could have it thereby either 'in life or death, ſince all my life I might not ſeek after aſſurance of being 'ſaved, for that was called the Proteſtants preſumption, and at my death 'nothing but purgatory, a fire as hot as hell, and as great torments there, as 'they made me trow I muſt go to, but wiſt not how to get out again, yea, 'how to eſcape hell it ſelf, ſince I behoved to come ſo near to it. I won-'dered, and yet wonder how any that looks for purgatory at their death, can 'either have true peace, or any comfort in the world; I am ſure they muſt 'either take it for a fiction, as it is, or elſe forget themſelves, when they are 'cheerful: Yet for all this I continued in obedience for their injunctions, 'but would gladly have had a reaſon for what I did, and a warrant that God 'would be pleaſed therewith: But could find nothing, but man's word for all; 'and was told by ſuch, as gave themſelves for teachers, that either I muſt be 'content to believe as the Kirk believed, or elſe I would get no other ſatiſ-'faction. I thought upon this from time to time, and at laſt ſaw, that this 'was no ſure ground to lean upon, except I would content my ſelf with this, 'that the Clergy knew, albeit I knew not; that they ſaw, albeit I was blind; 'that they knew the gate to heaven though I was not ſure whether I was going 'to heaven or purgatory: but this blind obedience might well pleaſe them, 'it could never give me content, except they could ſhew, that my obedience 'to the Pope, and his Clergy, ſhould be as acceptable to the Lord, as if it were 'to Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and would not be quarrelled at the day of judg-'ment. Theſe queſtions riſing then in my mind, with the ſlight ſatisfaction 'I got, I muſt confeſs, put me to many thoughts of heart; yet ſtill I kept 'from proteſtant books, or conference with any ſuch, eſpecially the mini-'ſters, as long as I could: but when I ſaw no outgate, I was forced to lay 'aſide all my beads and books, and go to God himſelf for Chriſt's ſake, to 'teach me how to do his will: but more and more doubts aroſe about ſundry 'points of my religion, though I would never let the truth have place, ſo 'long as I could hold it out. The Lord forgive me, for I did it ignorantly. 'Yet notwithſtanding he was pleaſed to bear in light, and his truth upon me, 'as I was forced to acknowledge the ſame, and leave theſe errors. I cannot 'tell all, nor the order of this, how they fell in my mind: but firſt I reſolv'd 'to believe neither prieſt nor miniſter, except ſo far as I underſtood their 'warrant from the word of God: For I knew there was no ſure ground to 'reſt on, and if any thing pleaſed the Lord, it would be obedience to his own 'direction, and might well quarrel mens doctrine; but could never quarrel 'his own word. I reſolved then to read the *Rhemiſts New Teſtament*, and 'the *Proteſtant Old Teſtament*, for I wiſt well the Lord would never be 'angry to read his own word, ſince I knew it pertained to my ſoul, as well as 'other folks, and I found it the ſweeteſt and pleaſanteſt book that ever I read 'in my life. I loved their cauſe the worſe who held me ſo long from read-'ing it, and a bad token of them that loved not the ſcriptures, for if they 'loved them, they could not have ſpoken of them as they did, ſaying they 'are not perfect, they are not clear, nor plain, but obſcure and ambiguous; 'yea, dangerous to be read, for breeding errors in ſuch that read the ſame, 'which cannot but ſcare all that believe them from the Lord's word. Sure

'this is an injury to Chriſt and his Apoſtles, to ſpeak ſo of their writings, 'as they could not be content that men ſhould ſpeak ſo of theirs. Thus I 'perceived to be falſe, their alledging the Pope and Roman *Kirk* could not 'err, and how proud a word this was for any ſinful fleſh. Sure the apo-'ſtle *Peter* was as good as any ſuch, and yet erred, and might have erred 'further, if God had not preſerved him. And in reading the *Rhemiſts New* 'Teſtament, I found a warrant that young children might read the ſcriptures 'with profit, and that it ſerves to inſtruct and make men perfect in what con-'cerns ſalvation. I fell another day upon the *firſt epiſtle of John*, where I 'found no neceſſity was of our confeſſing of ſins to the prieſt; but of con-'feſſion thereof to God; who is faithful to cleanſe us from all ſin; and 'that no advocate there is, but Chriſt. And again, if any ſay, *they* 'have no ſin, they lie, and the truth is not in them, which I thought a 'ſore word againſt them who ſay, they cannot fulfill the law only, but do 'more than God commands, by works of ſupererogation. As for that ac-'ception of mortal and venial ſins, it could not ſatisfy, when Chriſt ſhews, 'that they who ſay, *thou fool, are guilty of hell fire.* Although ſome ſins 'be greater than others, yet the leaſt brings us under the curſe, if God deal 'in the way of juſtice with us, I fell out of conceit with their legends and live 'of their ſaints, when I conſidered ſome abominable lies I found in them: As 'that of St. *Catharine of Sienna*, whom they alledge laid her mouth to 'Chriſt's ſide, and drunk her ſacrament, and that he interchanged hearts with 'her, and came down from heaven, and brought his mother with St. *Peter* 'and St. *Paul* with him, and wedded her with a ring. I was made to diſ-'reliſh their form of prayers, and repeating over and over again the ſame 'words, until their beads be ended. I perceived all their devotion they 'taught, ſtood in words and ceremonies which God cares not for. How-'ever, I diſliked many things, and was aſſured they were wrong, yet I never 'renounced them, till I found my ſelf miſtaken in the matter of the ſacra-'ment, and found in reading the *epiſtle* to the *Hebrews*, there is no neceſ-'ſity to offer daily *Hoſties* for the ſins of the people.' For this Chriſt did once in offering up himſelf, who continues for ever, and hath an ever-laſting prieſthood, whereby he is able to ſave for ever them that go unto God by him. And again, that Chriſt was gone into heaven, to appear before God, not that he muſt offer up himſelf any more, for then muſt he have of-ten ſuffered from the beginning of the world, but now once he appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf. 'Thus I perceive, if the ſcripture 'be true, no man can offer Chriſt but himſelf, nor can there be a prieſt 'after him now, *ſince he ever lives himſelf to make interceſſion for us*, nor 'can Chriſt be offered oftner than once, neither is any need of this, *ſince by* 'one offering he hath taken away the ſins of his people; yea, this is as impoſ-'ſible, as that he ſhould ſuffer oftner than once. Then I thought, if Chriſt 'be not offered in his bodily ſubſtance in the maſs, there can be no Tran-'ſubſtantiation in it. My teachers herein called me curious, but gave me no 'good anſwer. I wondered alſo at that place, 1 *Cor.* x. where it is ſaid, 'that *in the wilderneſs they did eat the ſame ſpiritual meat, and drunk the ſame ſpiritual drink, for they drunk of that ſpiritual rock, which followed them, and that rock was Chriſt.* 'Since they made me believe, that Chriſt 'could not be in a ſpiritual way by faith eaten or drunk, as the Proteſtants 'teach, but his very fleſh and blood taken in at the mouth ſubſtantially. I 'thought, how can the rock be called Chriſt, ſince literally it could not be 'in the ſenſe of the *Romiſh* church, ſince he was not yet incarnate: if it be 'a figure, then the Proteſtants muſt have the better in the matter of the Sacra-

'ment, ſince as the rock is called Chriſt, ſo is the bread called his body. 'Theſe doubts about the Sacrament ſo affected me, as I could not but chooſe, 'and ſend for a miniſter, (Let any judge, if it was not then time) with 'whom I reaſoned thereanent. He anſwered my doubts, and directed me to 'prayer herein, ſhewing I could not get ſolid reſt, till the Lord made his 'word lively on my ſoul, which I found after made good, the Lord making 'the ſcripture efficacious, lively and clear in the points I doubted of, and gave 'both ſuch aſſurance of his love, and of the true religion, that all the earth 'could not have bred me ſuch joy and ſolid peace, beyond any thing I can 'utter. I have now got the aſſurance in ſome meaſure, which I was ſeek-'ing. I have found the true ground to reſt upon, and God's own truth made 'lively. I am now free from the fear of purgatory; I ſcorn that fiction now 'with joy, and I am aſſured the Lord is righteous, who will not exact twice pay-'ment of one debt, Chriſt's paſſion, and his peoples torment in a fire as hot 'as hell. The Lord, who hath promiſed a ſufficient cautioner for us, that 'we might eſcape torment, cannot come ſhort herein. The Lord help ſuch, 'who live in fear of this wicked fiction. If the *Pope*, and the Clergy, for the 'love they have to money, keep the world in ſuch fearful blindneſs, they 'have their judge to anſwer unto. I praiſe the Lord who has delivered me out 'of theſe errors, I renounce them, and have found too great mercy in the 'knowledge of the truth to make an exchange again. O that all knew the 'difference as well as I have felt'.

Beſides theſe choice and weighty *inſtances* before mentioned, I muſt here further add a few memorable paſſages of the death of ſome grave and eminent miniſters of Chriſt in our country, worthy to be recorded, as a ſeal not only of their miniſtry, and acceptance therein with their maſter, but to the truth of godlineſs, and doctrine of the Proteſtant church; which have hitherto been little known, nor were mentioned amongſt the inſtances of ſome great and extraordinary miniſters of Chriſt in the church of *Scotland* formerly publiſhed; the truth whereof I had from one of the graveſt miniſters of our church, both for judgment and piety in that time, yea under his own hand, who was himſelf preſent at the death of all here mentioned, excepting this firſt *inſtance*, which was many years before.

SECT. 13. It may be an aſtoniſhing paſſage anent the death of that worthy man of God Mr. *David Black*, ſet down by his old intimate friend Mr. *Andrew Melvin*, with whom for a time he was collegue in St. *Andrews*, until for the truth, and his adherence thereto, he was after forced by a confinement to a more retired place beyond *Tay in Angus*, where his miniſtry was until his death, which paſſage he aſſuredly knowing, the truth thereof he relates thus. 'That after near communion with God, and extraordinary 'aſſiſtance in publick a few days before his death, where he ſeemed not only 'to ſurpaſs all others, but himſelf alſo at that time, with ſuch a diſcernible 'gale of the ſpirit, both to humble the hearts of his hearers, and after to ſuch 'a melting of their ſpirits, as they burſt forth in rivers of tears, and thus to 'engage them to take on the ſweet and eaſy yoke of Chriſt. He found then 'alſo upon his own ſoul ſuch a ſenſible taſte of heaven, and being admitted 'to feel, as it were, the air of that country with ſome unuſual enjoyment of 'the hid pleaſures and delights, which are there. He was ſeized with a fer-'vent longing to put off his earthly tabernacle, that he might get a dimiſſi-'on from the Lord from his priſon here, to that unconceivably bleſſed ſtate and 'fellowſhip of the ſociety above, to which, by a marvelous condeſcendence, 'the Lord did ſo far indulge his ſervant after many ſore conflicts, and wreſt-'lings he had in his life, to give ſuch a ſecret hint and intimation of this to him-

'ſelf

'ſelf, as he could not conceal it, not only from his family, but from his flock, 'taking a moſt ſolemn farewell of them all, with a diſcourſe, *as Mr. Mel-* 'vin ſhews, that ſeem'd to be ſpoke out of heaven, concerning the miſeries 'and grief here, with that unconceivable glory, which is above, and his aſ- 'ſurance to be there. The night following, after a ſhort ſupper, and having 'read and prayed in his family, with ſome unuſual continuance, ſtrong and 'heavy groans, and deep wreſtlings, he went a little to bed. And the next 'day, having then called his people to the celebration of the ſacrament, went 'to church, where after ſermon, and celebration of the communion, he had 'ſcarce ended, when he finds the approaches of death ſeize upon him, with 'ſuch a preſent change, as his friends eſſayed to hold him up on every hand; 'but peſſing to be at his knees, with his hands and eyes lift up to heaven, in 'the very act of adoration as in a tranſport, is taken away without pain or 'trouble.' Thus as the relator foreſaid ſhews, that that holy and excellent man did breath forth his precious ſoul in ſo extraordinary a way, that as he ſays it ſeemed rather like a *tranſlation*, than a death, and without any known ſickneſs. This account by that famous ſervant of Chriſt, Mr. *Andrew Melvin*, was many years ſince publiſhed, with this title, *Mira & vera relatio de* Davidis Blackij *tranſmigratione in Cœl ſtem Patriam.*

Sect. 14. Mr. *Robert Scot*, a truly godly and able miniſter of Chriſt at *Glaſgow*, died *January* 18, 1629. On his death-bed he did witneſs his ſoul's abhorrence at the wicked and corrupt courſes of the time, 'and my com- 'fort is, ſaith he, that God with-held me from them. If I were to live, I 'ſhould not be ſo ſparing as I have been to witneſs againſt theſe.' And a little before his death, he lay ſometime as in a kind of *trance*, and after his awaking out of it, took off his night-cap, and threw it to the bed-feet, and cryed out, *I have now ſeen the Lord, and heard him ſay, make way for my faithful ſervant* Mr. *Robert Scot*, bidding his friends farewell; and then after died.

Sect. 15. Mr. *Robert Cunningham, miniſter at Holywod* in the *North* of *Ireland*, about whom this account I had from the ſame worthy relator and others his intimate acquaintance there, that he was the one man to his diſcerning of all that ever he knew, who reſembled moſt the meekneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, in his whole carriage, and was ſo convincing in his way to the moſt groſs, and reverenced by all, that he was oft troubled with that ſcripture, 'woe to you, 'when all men ſpeak well of you', ſo as it was told ſome of his adverſaries in that place, that it was ſure, if ever they meddled with Mr. *Cunningham*, their cup would be full. He was ſometimes in publick preaching to his own ſenſe, not ſo aſſiſted as uſually: but even then to the diſcerning chriſtians of theſe times, was as edifying and refreſhful as at any time elſe, but ordinarily was born through with a full gale. I was with him (ſaith he) at his death in *Irwin* in the year 1637. At which time, beſides many other weighty expreſſions, he ſaid one time. *I ſee Chriſt ſtanding over death's head, and ſaying, deal warily with my ſervant, looſe now this one pin, and here another, for this tabernacle muſt be ſet up again. A little before his death, his wife ſitting on the bed-ſide, where he lay, and her hand in his, he did by prayer recommend to God the whole church, the word of the goſpel in* Ireland, *his own pariſh, and his children, and in end ſaid, And laſtly O Lord, I recommend to thee this* Gentlewoman, *who is no more my wife, and with that ſaying, he ſoftly looſed his hand from her's, and gently thruſt it a little from him, at which both ſhe and ſome others preſent burſt out in weeping, and within a little after he render'd up his ſpirit.*

Sect. 16. Mr. *Joſias Welſh*, miniſter at *Temple Patrick* in *Ireland*, as the former worthy relator ſhews, died *June* 23, 1634. with whom he was then

then preſent. He had many gracious and edifying expreſſions, though alſo ſome wreſtlings, as in much of his life he had been thus kept under deep inward exerciſes, a little before his cloſe he ſaid with a ſad groan, *Oh for hypocriſy*, upon which one ſpeaks to the company of chriſtians then preſent; See how Satan faſtens on the heel of this ſervant of Chriſt, even when he is going in over the threſhold of heaven. A little after, whilſt he was at prayer at his bed-ſide, and that word *Victory*, coming out of his mouth, he preſently took hold of his hand, and deſired him to ceaſe a little, and clapping both his hands together cried out, *Victory, victory, victory, for evermore*, and then deſired him to go on in prayer, and in ſhort time after died.

This was the more obſervable, in ſo ſweet and triumphant a cloſe, that, through moſt of the time of his miniſtry, he had ſuch frequent and ſharp conflicts in his own private caſe, ſo as once after he had been through the exerciſe of his ſpirit brought ſo low, as put his friends to ſome aſtoniſhment thereanent, he was enforced to deſire a meeting of theſe great and eminent miniſters of Chriſt who then lived in that country near him, ſhewing his preſſure was ſuch, as he could no longer conceal what was on his ſpirit thereanent: And after meeting together with prayer, whilſt his countenance ſpake the weight of his inward exerciſe, and with tears running over his face, he told them the cauſe of that meeting, that he had been now for a long time preſt to deſert the miniſtry; having preached for ſo many years the goſpel of Chriſt to others, and yet himſelf but a caſt-away. Thus did the Lord graciouſly deal with his ſervant, ſo as the truth of his own grace was hid from himſelf, whilſt it ſhin'd in the greateſt luſtre to the conviction of others: but this advantage alſo followed thereon, that his miniſtry then was made moſt remarkably fruitful, not in the place he lived in only, but in the whole country, and thus fitted by his own exerciſe and wreſtlings, to deal with the conſciences of others.

Sect. 17. Mr. *John Schrymger* miniſter at *Kinghorn*, a man not ſo poliſh'd, but rude-like in his deport and manner, but of a deep reach of natural wit, very learned and knowing in the *Hebrew* language, and of eminent piety. He told this paſſage to ſome of his intimate friends, that having diverſe children taken away by death, and one young daughter at that time, whom he loved moſt dearly, under that diſeaſe of the cruels, which is called the King's Evil, with ſeveral running ſores thus upon her, ſo as ſhe was at the point of death. He was one night called up to ſee her die, and finding her in that caſe, went out to the fields, as he told, in the night ſeaſon, being in great grief and anxiety, ſo as he adventured when alone on ſuch expoſtulating with the Lord, and with ſuch expreſſions, ſo as for all the world he durſt not again utter. And being thus preſt, ſaid, *thou knowſt, O Lord, I hitherto have ſerved thee in the uprightneſs of my heart according to my power, nor have ſtood in awe to declare thy mind before the greateſt whoſoever in the time, and thou ſeeſt I take pleaſure in this child, and cannot obtain ſuch a thing at thy hand as her ſparing: for I was* (ſaith he) *then in great agony of ſpirit: but at laſt it was ſaid to him from the Lord, I have heard thee at this time, but uſe not this boldneſs with me in time coming for ſuch particulars.* And when he came home, the child was ſitting up in her bed taking meat, and fully whole, and when he look'd to theſe ſores, that had been running upon her, they were quite healed. A little before his death, that foreſaid worthy miniſter of Chriſt the relator, went to ſee him, where he was under ſuch ſore pain of the ſtone, as he was ſometimes enforced to cry out. He ſaid to him, my nature hath been rude and ſlunkard all my days, and now by this pain, the Lord is even dauntoning me, to make me as a Lamb, before he take me to himſelf.

SECT. 18. This inſtance I judged worthy to be inſert, having ſuch aſſurance of the truth thereof, namely of Mr. *John* Mc. *Birney*, miniſter in *Aberdeen*, a godly, zealous and painful preacher, he uſed always when he rode to have two *Bibles* with him, the one in the *Original*, the other in *Engliſh*, and being alone was then exerciſed, either in reading, meditating or praying, and if any were in company with him, he would read or ſpeak from the ſcripture to them. When he died, he called his wife, and told her, he had no outward means to leave either to her, or to his only daughter, who had ſurvived him, but had got aſſurance from the Lord, that he ſhould provide for them both. And accordingly the day he was buried, the magiſtrates of the town came to the houſe after the burial, and brought two ſubſcribed papers, one of a competent maintenance to his wife during her life, another of a proviſion for his daughter.

CHAP. VI.

SECT. 1. THAT the Lords way and appearances for the church of *Scotland*, ſince the late bleſſed *Reformation from Popery*, both in the riſe, and advance thereof, had been truly *extraordinary and marvelous*, may be demonſtrable on theſe grounds. 1. That this great Reformation, was at ſuch a remarkable period, as at no time it could in an ordinary way have ſeemed more hopeleſs, theſe being conſidered. 1. How little of any human or viſible encouragements concurred thereto, to darken that brightneſs of the Lord's own appearance in this marvelous and ſpreading of his kingdom through that land. 2. That by the Queen's marriage with the *French King*, the adverſaries of the truth, had the ſtrength of this kingdom, beſides thoſe that were amongſt themſelves to concur in oppoſition to the work of God there. 3. We ſee the Queen *Dowager* then at the helm of government, and her greateſt aim with the furtheſt both of ſubtilty and force, to cruſh and bear down any ſtirrings of the work of the Lord at that time. 3. That bloody and cruel man *Cardinal Beton*, who with greateſt vigour and authority did act beyond any of his predeceſſors, to bear down any riſing of the goſpel at that time.

SECT. 2. It was undeniable, how the firſt inſtruments whom the Lord called forth about his work in that land, were then extraordinarily called, and had a moſt convincing ſeal thereof. I ſhall only ſet down the firſt *three*; who with ſuch an extraordinary appearance of the Lord, were ſent forth upon his work in that land. 1. Mr. *Patrick Hamilton*, a young gentleman of great birth, of excellent parts and learning, fervent in the truth, who was quickly taken away, whom the zeal of God did ſo eat up, that after his travelling abroad, and familiar converſe with ſuch men as *Luther* and *Melanchon*, thoſe bright beams of light then planted in his heart, did enforce a publick vent of the ſame. But the popiſh Clergy, under the dread of their own hazard did with all poſſible vigour beſtir themſelves to have him taken away, and to labour with the King then young, to go in pilgrimage to St. *Dothies* in *Roſs*, that thus no interceſſion in his abſence might be made for him. But it may be no leſs ſeen, how this heat for having him taken out of the way, did moſt obſerveably help to bring down the houſe over them, and a greater ruin to their intereſt by his death, than his life. At the place of his execution he exhorted to bear in mind the *example* of his death, which though bitter to the fleſh, (yet ſaid) it is the entrance into eternal life, which none ſhall poſſeſs, who denies Jeſus Chriſt before this wicked generation. And whilſt one *Campbel* a Friar, did moſt trouble him in the very time of his ſufferings, he ſaid, *Wicked man, thou knoweſt the contrary and haſt confeſſed the ſame*

to me, I appeal thee before the tribunal ſeat of Chriſt: After which, within a few days the ſaid Friar died in much terror of conſcience, and as one deſperate. This was *Anno Ch.* 1527.

SECT. 3. As a further witneſs to this, I muſt inſtance that great ſervant of Chriſt, Mr. *George Wiſhart*, who a little after was ſent forth to publiſh the goſpel there, whoſe life being at large inſerted in that hiſtory of the Reformation of the church of *Scotland*, was the reaſon I forbore to mention him amongſt theſe great inſtruments of our church, I have elſe where recorded. But ſince many can have little acceſs for peruſal of this, yea, that without the leaſt heſitation, from all the records of the church ſince the firſt times of the apoſtles, a more extraordinary ambaſſador of Chriſt cannot be inſtanced. I ſhall give this ſhort account of him, from Mr. *Knox* himſelf, who then was much with him; yea, not only from the printed hiſtory of the church, that was by him penn'd, but by a manuſcript from his own mouth bearing the ſame account, which I have beſide me. This great man, after this being for a conſiderable time abroad, being one of admirable grace and ſingularly learned, both in divine and human Sciences, did at laſt return to his own country, where he firſt preached in *Montroſs*, and then in *Dundee*, to the admiration of all that heard him, until that one *Robert Mill* in that town, at the inſtigation of the Cardinal (though he being a principal man there, had ſometime been a profeſſor of religion) did in the time of publick ſermon, inhibit his troubling their town any more by preaching, ſince he would not ſuffer it. Whereupon this bleſſed man, muſing a little with his eyes bent unto heaven, *ſaid, God is my witneſs, that I never minded your trouble, but your comfort; yea, it is more ſad to me than your ſelves: But I am ſure, that to refuſe and chaſe from you his meſſengers, ſhall not preſerve you from trouble, but bring you into it, and God ſhall ſend you miniſters, that ſhall neither fear burning nor baniſhment, I have offered you the word of ſalvation with the hazard of my life, but now ye refuſe me, and I muſt leave my innocency to be declared by my God. If it be long proſperous with you, I am not led by the ſpirit of truth, but if unlooked for trouble come, acknowledge the cauſe, and turn to God who is gracious and merciful.* Some noblemen then preſent perſuaded him to ſtay, which by no means he would, but went to the weſt country with an offer of the goſpel, where he was gladly received by many, though the Biſhop of *Glaſgow*, with his trains came to the town of *Air* to reſiſt him, and ſecured the publick church for himſelf to preach in, which whilſt ſome oppoſed, Mr. *Wiſhart* ſaid, let me alone, let us go to the market croſs, and ſo they did; where he made ſo notable a ſermon, as his very enemies themſelves were confounded. After he came to *Machlin*, where he was by force kept out of the church. To ſome who would have broke in he ſaid, *Jeſus Chriſt is as mighty in the fields, as in the church, yea, he often preached in the deſert, at the ſea ſide, and in other places. It is the word of peace God ſends by me, the blood of none ſhall this day be ſhed for it*, and ſo going to the fields, he ſtood on a bank, where he continued preaching three hours, and God wrought ſo wonderfully thereby, as one of the wickedeſt men in all the country, the *Laird of Sheld*, was converted, and his eyes ran down with ſuch abundance of teats, as all men wondered. It was then the news was brought to Mr. *Wiſhart*, that the plague was broke up in *Dundee*, within four days after he was prohibited to preach there, yea, with ſuch rage, as its almoſt beyond credit how many died. This being related to him, notwithſtanding the importunity of his friends, he would go thither, ſaying, they are now in trouble, and need comfort, perhaps this hand of God will make them reverence his word, which before they lightly eſteemed. Coming to

Dundee,

Dundee, the joy of the faithful was exceeding great, and becauſe moſt of the inhabitants were either ſick or imployed about them, he chooſed the eaſt-gate to preach upon, where the whole were within, and the ſick without the gate, his text, *Pſ.* cvii. *He ſent his word and healed them*, &c. Where he ſo comfortably held forth the gain and comfort of God's word; what puniſhment comes by contempt of it, and freedom of his grace to ſuch as truly turn to him, with the happineſs of his people whom he takes from this miſery, as the hearts of the hearers were ſo raiſed not to regard death, but to judge them the more happy who ſhould then depart, not knowing whether they might have ſuch a comforter again with them. After this the plague almoſt quite ceaſed, and when he took his leave of them ſaid, that God had almoſt put an end to that plague, and he was now called to another place, and thence he went to *Montroſs* to ſalute the church, where he ſometimes preached, but ſpent moſt of his time in private meditation, in which he was ſo earneſt, as night and day he continued in it. It was at that time the *Cardinal* conſpired his death, by a counterfeit letter of a friend of Mr. *Wiſhart*, the *Laird* of *Kinneere*, that with all poſſible ſpeed he would come to him, ſince he was taken with a ſudden ſickneſs. In the mean time, did ſixty armed men ly in wait within a mile and an half of the town of *Montroſs* to murder him in the way. The letter coming to his hands by a boy, who alſo brought him an horſe to ride on, he ſet forwards with ſome honeſt men there, who were his friends: but ſuddenly ſtooping and muſing a ſpace in the way, he returned, which they wondering at, asked the cauſe, to whom he ſaid, *I will not go, I am forbidden of God, and aſſuredly there is treachery: Let ſome of you go to yonder place, and tell me what ye find*, which they doing, fouud to be truth, and on their return told Mr. *Wiſhart* of it, whereon he ſaid, I know I ſhall end my life by that blood thirſty man, but it will not be on this manner. The time approaching for his meeting the gentlemen at *Edenburgh*, he took his leave and departed, and by the way, as he lodged with a faithful brother, *James Watſon* of *Innergowry*, he got up in the night, and went into a yard, upon which two friends hearing, did ſecretly follow: there he walking in an alley for ſome ſpace, breathing forth many ſobs and deep groans, then fell on his knees, and his groans increaſed, and then upon his face. Thoſe that watched him found him thus weeping and praying an hour, after which upon his incoming, they adventured to ask him where he had been, ſaying, be plain with us, for we have heard your mourning, and ſaw your geſtures; to whom with a ſad countenance he ſaid, I had rather ye had been in your beds: but I will tell you, I am aſſured my warfare is near an end, and therefore pray with me, that I ſhrink not now when the battle is moſt hot: upon which with weeping they ſaid, this is ſmall comfort to us, to whom he anſwered, *God ſhall ſend you comfort after. This Realm ſhall be enlightned with the light of Chriſt's goſpel as clearly, as any day ſince the days of the Apoſtles; yea, the houſe of God ſhall be built there, and ſhall not want in deſpite of enemies the very copſtone put upon it, nor will it be long before this ſhall be, and many ſhall not ſuffer after me, till the glory of God ſhall appear and triumph in deſpite of Satan: but alas! if the people afterwards prove unthankful, then fearful ſhall the plagues be that will follow.* Then went he upon his journey to *Leith*: but hearing nothing of thoſe gentlemen that were to meet with him, he kept himſelf retired and grew penſive, and being asked the reaſon, ſaid, *what differ I from a dead man: hitherto God hath uſed my labours for inſtruction, and to the diſcloſing of darkneſs, and now I lurk as one that dare not ſhew his face*, hereupon his friends finding his deſire to preach, ſaid, it is moſt comfortable for us to hear you, but

for

for the danger you are in, we dare not desire it. To whom he said, let God provide for me, as pleaseth him, if you dare hear; and so preached on the parable of the *Sower*, *Matth.* xiii. and a little after preached at *Enneresk* near *Musleburgh*, where was a great confluence of people, and whilst two *Gray Friars* then at the church door, whispered to such as came in, Mr. *Wishart* observing said to the people, I pray you make room for these men, it may be they come to learn: and to them he said, come near, *for I assure you, ye shall hear the word of truth, which this day shall seal up either your salvation or damnation.* But whilst they still continued to disturb the people, he turned to them the second time with an angry countenance, and said, *O ministers of Satan, will ye neither hear the truth, nor suffer others to hear it: depart and take this for your portion, God shall shortly confound and disclose your hypocrisy within this kingdom, you shall be abominable to men, and your places and habitations desolate.* This he spake with much vehemency, and turning to the people said; *These men have provoked the spirit of God into anger*, and then proceeded in his sermon. After he preached in diverse places else, the people much flocking after him, and in all his sermons foretold the shortness of time he had to travel, and near approach of his death. Coming to *Haddington*, his auditory began much to decrease by the Earl of *Bothwell*, whose power was great there, and upon the instigation of the *Cardinal* had prohibited such, both of the country and town, from hearing. As he was going to church, he received a letter from the west-country gentlemen, and having read it, said to *John Knox*, who then diligently waited upon him, that he was weary of the world, because he saw men to be weary of God, for the gentlemen of the west have sent me word, that they cannot keep the meeting at *Edenburgh*. Mr. *Knox* wondering he should speak this so immediately before sermon contrary to his way, said. Sir, Sermon now approaches, I will leave you to your meditation. Then Mr. *Wishart* walked up and down about half an hour, his sad countenance shewing the grief of his mind, and after went to the pulpit, where his auditory being small, he begun in this manner: *O Lord, how long shall it be, that thy holy word shall be despised, and men not regard their own salvation. I have heard of thee* O Haddington, *that two or three thousand persons would be at a vain and wicked play, and now to hear the messenger of the eternal God, can scarce one hundred be numbred. Sore and fearful shall the plagues be, which will ensue on such a contempt, with fire and sword shalt thou be plagued, yea, thee* Haddington *in special, strangers shall possess, and the present inhabitants shall either in bondage serve their enemies, or shall be chased from their own habitations, and that because ye have not known, nor will know the time of your visitation.* This prophecy was accomplished not long after, as Mr. *Knox* shews, and was then known to all; whilst the *English* made it a garrison, and after having burnt and spoiled a great part of it, the *French* that came as auxiliaries did help forward that stroke, so as this town did never recover her former beauty, nor men of such wisdom and parts, as did formerly inhabit it. That night was Mr. *Wishart* apprehended in the house of *Ormestone* by the *Earl* of *Bothwell*, suborned thereto by the *Cardinal*; The manner was thus. After sermon he took his last farewell of his friends in *Haddington*, *John Knox* would have fain gone with him, but he said, *Return to your children, and God bless you, sufficient is one for one sacrifice.* And then went to the house of *Ormestone* with the *Laird*, and others who accompanied him, and after supper had a comfortable discourse of the love of God towards his children, upon which after singing *Ps.* li. he retired to his chamber, praying that the Lord, if it were his good will, would give com-

fortable reſt to them that night: but at midnight the houſe was beſet; and the Earl of *Bothwell* ſhewed the *Laird* of the houſe; it was in vain to reſiſt, ſince the Governor and Cardinal were within a mile thence at *Elphinſton*, with a great power, but gave furtheſt aſſurances, that if they would open the gates, Mr. *Wiſhart* ſhould be ſafe; to whom the *Laird of Ormeſtone*, with ſome Barons then preſent; ſaid unto *Bothwell* (ſuch was their love and fervency for the truth,) *My Lord, if you keep promiſe, we will give you a band of manrent, and not only our ſelves will ſerve you, but will procure all the profeſſors of* Louthian *to do the ſame.* But this was quickly broke upon *Bothwell's* account. And after was that holy and excellent man taken to St. *Andrews*, where the Cardinal, with others of the Clergy did with greateſt vigour purſue him to death, at which time turning to the people, when he was brought to the fire, he ſaid, *I beſeech you, be not offended at the word of God, for the torments which ye ſee prepared for me, but I exhort you to love the word and ſuffer patiently, and with a comfortable heart for the word's ſake, which is your undoubted ſalvation; and everlaſting comfort. I pray you alſo ſhew my brethren, that they ceaſe not to learn the word of God which I taught, according to the meaſure of the grace given; for no perſecution nor trouble in this world, and that this doctrine was no old wifes fables, but the truth of God, for if I had taught mens doctrine, I ſhould have had greater thanks from men; but for the words ſake I now ſuffer, not ſorrowfully, but with a glad heart; for this I was ſent into the world, that for Chriſt's ſake I ſhould ſuffer this fire. Behold my face, you ſhall not ſee me change my countenance. I fear not the fire, and if perſecution ariſe for the word's ſake, fear not them that can kill the body, and have not power to hurt the ſoul. And when the fire was kindled, ſaid, this torments my body, but no whit abates my ſpirit.* Then looking towards the Cardinal he ſaid. *He who in ſuch ſtate from that high place feeds his eyes with torments, within a few days ſhall be hanged out of the ſame window, to be ſeen with as much ignominy, as he now leans there with pride.* Which prediction was a few days after moſt remarkably fulfilled.

SECT. 4. Seeing there is a publick account of Mr. *Knox*, that deſervedly famous inſtrument for the work of Reformation in the church of *Scotland*, I forbear to give any repetition here: But this further, which is not inſerted in the account given of his life, and which with ſome aſſurance I can ſet down here, I thought worthy to relate. How before his death, when he was enforced to go over to St. *Andrews* from *Edenburgh*, becauſe of the *Queens* faction, which was ſo ſtrong in the town and the caſtle, kept out upon her intereſt, yea, was ſo weak, as to be helped to the church, leaning upon his ſervant *Richard Balantine*; he told the people, that the caſtle ſhould vomit out the captain thereof, who was the *Laird of Grange*; and that he ſhould not come forth of the gate, but over the walls, and that *tower* of the *caſtle*, which was called *David's* Tower, ſhould run like a ſand-glaſs; upon which one Mr. *Robert Hamilton* miniſter there, uſed ſome freedom to ask what warrant he had for this; he anſwered, *Thou ſhalt ſee this with thine eyes; and know it to be truth*; as it came to paſs, he being then in *Edenburgh*, when the fore work of the *caſtle* was demoliſhed by the *Engliſh* cannon, and run down like a ſandy bray, he ſaw the captain come over the walls with a ſtaff in his hand, becauſe the gate was then ſtopped with the rubbiſh, and how in this very circumſtance the words of that man of God were accompliſhed. It was a little before this he ſent by Mr. *David Lindſay*, a grave miniſter. to the *Laird* of *Grange*, that meſſage which is publiſhed in his life, to whom he ſaid, you know I have loved this gentleman well, but ſhew him from me, that if he do

not give over his hoſtile oppoſition, he ſhall be brought over the walls with ſhame, and he hung up with his face to the ſun, as after exactly fell out, and ſaid further of this, God hath aſſured me. Upon which delivery of that meſſage by Mr. *Lindſay*, and a return of his anſewer both from the captain and ſecretary *Lethington*, who was then there, he ſaid, *I am ſorry, that this ſhould befal him, yet God aſſureth me, there is mercy for his ſoul, for the other I have no warrant that it ſhall be well with him, which words after,* Grange *deſired Mr.* David Lindſay *to tell him over again before his death, (being truly penitent) and was much comforted therewith, and ſaid, I hope to give ſome evidence of the Lord's making good the words of that man of God at my death, as fell out moſt diſcernibly both by his words and carriage at that time. A little before Mr.* Knox's *own death, he ſaid, I have been fighting with ſpiritual wickedneſs, and have prevailed, I have been in heaven and taſted of the heaven'y joys, and if it were the good will of the Lord, he hath ſo far ſubjected my ſpirit to his will, as to be content, though for many years, to lie under this pain and trouble, which now is upon me.*

Sect. 5. Some ſignal and aſtoniſhing providences for making way to the work of Reformation, there might be ſeen then, as a convincing witneſs thereto, 1. That ſurpriſing death of *Henry* II. *of France*, and within a little of *Francis* his ſon, to whom the Crown then by marriage with the *young Queen* was ſo far made over, as was like to bring both the civil and religious intereſt of the nation under the *French* yoke, and to have moſt enforcing ſnares therewith, for engaging ſuch as were of greateſt power then, to a compliance with their way, on whom they ſaw their hope ſo viſibly depend. 2. That ſtupendious and ſtately act of the judgment of the Lord, in the death of *Cardinal Beton*, who was ſo great an adverſary to the truth, and in whoſe hand the whole power civil and eccleſiaſtick ſeemed to be ingroſſed; where all may ſee an extraordinary providence, and the immediate finger of God, except they will ſhut their eyes. 1. In the ſtrange excitement of inſtruments to adventure thereon, againſt all human reaſon, or any appearance how they could withſtand the power of the Popiſh party, both at home and abroad. 2. How ſome of thoſe were enforced to declare their having no intereſt or motive elſe, but to avenge the blood of that excellent man Mr. *Wiſhart*; and of his being a ſworn adverſary to Jeſus Chriſt and his truth, for which they were ſent of the Lord. 3. So ſtrange a concurrence of things to make this effectual, that in one morning, not above eighteen ſeiſed on that ſtrong *caſtle* in St. *Andrews*, where he lived, and put near an hundred ſervants and workmen out of the gates, without tumult or blood. 4. How this was in a very few days after the ſufferings of that man of God, yea, ſo manifeſt an accompliſhment of his prediction before the world, that out of the place where the Cardinal was looking forth, with greateſt joy to feed his eyes upon the ſufferings of that bleſſed witneſs for Chriſt, he ſhould be hung over as a ſpectacle of the holy judgment of God, whilſt nothing then, in an ordinary way, could have ſeemed more improbable. 5. The remarkable preſervation and return of all thoſe, after they were ſent priſoners to *France*, as Mr. *Knox*, who was then there, did with greateſt aſſurance from the Lord promiſe.

Sect. 6. It is aſtoniſhing, and ſhould be matter of wonder and praiſe for after ages, to conſider that ſolemn time of the *Reformation*, when the Lord began to viſit his church there, what a ſwift courſe the ſpreading of the kingdom of Chriſt had; and how Profeſſors of the truth thronged in, amidſt the greateſt threatnings of thoſe on whoſe ſide authority and power then was: O how

how aſtoniſhing and extraordinary was this appearance of the Lord there, on all ranks, to offer themſelves willingly for the truth, and upon ſuch of his ſervants, as were ſent forth in the work of the miniſtry; with ſuch zeal and oneneſs of ſpirit, as on the furtheſt hazard of their lives and eſtate, they did enter into *covenant* for mutual defence for the truth of Chriſt, and a free profeſſion thereof, as is ſet down at large in the hiſtory of the *Reformation*; firſt in the year 1557. and after at *Perth* in the year 1559. by *the congregation of the weſt country*, Perth, Dundee, Fife, Angus *and* Mearns; *to concur, aſſiſt and conveen together, and not ſpare labour, goods, ſubſtance, bodies and lives*, (for theſe are the words thereof,) *to maintain the liberty of the congregation, and every member thereof, againſt whomſoever that ſhould trouble them for the cauſe of religion.* Thus with no leſs evidence was this promiſe then accompliſhed in that age, as ever, *Iſa.* xl. 31. *That they who wait on the Lord, ſhould mount up as with Eagle's-wings, and ſhould run and not be weary, &c.* As Mr. *Knox* then ſhewed; *for what was our force ſaith he, or number to bring ſo great an enterpriſe to ſuch a cloſe, our very enemies can witneſs, yet in how great purity did God eſtabliſh his true religion amongſt us, and this we confeſs to be a ſtrength given us from God, becauſe we eſteemed not ourſelves wiſe in our own eyes, but knowing our wiſdom to be fooliſhneſs before God, laid it aſide, and followed that which was only approved of him. In this point could never our enemies cauſe us faint whilſt for this we wreſtled, that the reverend face of the firſt primitive and apoſtolick church, ſhould be reduced to the eyes and knowledge of men, and in that point hath our God ſtrengthned us till the work was finiſhed, as the world may ſee.* To this purpoſe doth Mr. *Knox* ſpeak. *Hiſt. of Reform. p.* 303. 304.

Sect. 7. To witneſs the immediate finger of the Lord here, and that his peopl's ſtrength then was in *his preſence going before them*, it was remarkable, *that ſudden ſurpriſing darkneſs, and almoſt univerſal faintneſs*, upon the ſpirits of all then engaged for the truth, a very little before this great deliverance, and ſettled calm in the church's eſtabliſhment. For at that time, whilſt the *French* kept *Leith*, and the Proteſtant party ſeemed moſt unite with a greater concurrence of the nobility and gentry, than had been formerly; ſuch *an amazing fear and terror*, did then ſeize on moſt, as they withdrew without any diſcernible cauſe, that all might ſee the Lord's bleſſed concurrence, and ſuch an high ſpring tide of his peoples zeal and reſolution for the truth, to have no neceſſary connection with human aſſiſtance, and furtheſt encouragements from that airth. At which time Mr. *Knox* preaching at *Stirling*, whither moſt in that confuſion and panick fear, were retired, had theſe words, as are at length ſet down in the *church hiſtory*. *This day are our faces confounded. Our hearts have quaked for fear, when we were very few in number in compariſon of our enemies, and had neither Duke or Lord, (for at this time* Duke Hamilton *was joined with the Lords of the congregation) except a very few. We called on God, and took him for our protector; and amongſt us was heard no boaſting of multitude, ſtrength or policy: but only did ſob up to God the equity of our cauſe: But now ſince our number is multiplied, eſpecially the Duke with his friends have joined with us, nothing was heard, but ſuch a Lord will bring ſo many hundred ſpears, and this man hath credit to perſuade the country. And thus we, who felt God's potent hand for our defence, have of late made fleſh our arm.* And a little after ſaith, *it reſteth that we return to our God, the Eternal God, who bears down to the death, that he may raiſe up again: and to leave a remembrance of his wondrous deliverance to the praiſe of his own name, which if we do unfainedly; I no more*

more doubt, that this confuſion and fear ſhall be turned into joy, honour and boldneſs, than I doubt that God gave victory to the Iſraelites, *after they had been twice repulſed. Yea, whatever become of us, I doubt not but this cauſe in deſpite of Satan ſhall yet triumph in this realm, for as its the eternal truth of God, ſo ſhall it once prevail, though for this time it be impugned, yea, it may be, God ſhall plague ſome, becauſe they delight not in the truth, but for worldly reſpects favour it: and take away ſome of his deareſt children, but neither ſhall the one or other hinder this work, but in end it ſhall triumph. Hiſt. Reform* p. 209. 210. The verification of which did in a ſhort time moſt remarkably follow.

Sect. 8. Such was the Lord's marvelous appearance then in the behalf of his church after ſo long a night of Antichriſtian darkneſs; as a few years, yea, months did bring forth that, which would have ſeemed improbable for an age to accompliſh; that we find betwixt the ſuffering of the laſt *Martyr* for the truth then, *Walter Mill*, who was burnt at St. *Andrews*, *April* 1558. and the eſtabliſhment of the Proteſtant Religion and civil ſanction to the confeſſion of faith, by the three eſtates of the nation, with a full aboliſhment of Popery, which followed that treaty and tranſaction at *Leith* with the *French* in *July* 1560. was but little above *two years*, to ſhew what great things the Lord can do, above that his people could either think or ask, and how ſometimes one year may bring forward that, which could not have been expected in many.

Sect. 9. Though it was not long before a ſharp and ſearching trial was upon the *Queen's* arrival from *France*, and theſe eſſays put on foot by ſubtilty, to accompliſh what open force could not do. Some memorable providences therewith are alſo worthy to be noticed. 1. That remarkable preſage at her very firſt arrival of what after followed, when ſo extraordinary appearance the face of the heavens had, that beſides the ſurface ſo moiſt, and corruption of the air, ſuch a miſt then was with a thick darkneſs, as ſcarce any could eſpy another for a little way, that day of her arrival, and two days after, nor did the ſun once ſhine all that time to the diſcerning of any, ſo as it is ſet down in the *Hiſtory* of the church, a more dolorous and aſtoniſhing face of the heaven hath not been ſince the memory of man, and in ſuch a time of the year. 2. The Lord's breaking of the moſt viſible eſſays, which then was againſt the Proteſtant intereſt, as in that memorable deliverance at that battle in the North againſt the *Earl of Huntly*, where the ſtrength of the Popiſh party was much joined, and a few on the Proteſtant ſide, but with ſuch a marvelous aſſiſtance, as they broke that army, even whilſt by a correſpondence, a conſiderable number of thoſe that were joined with them, fell in with the enemy in the very heat of the fight. At which time of ſo remarkable a ſtrait, *Secretary Lethington* being then preſent with the *Earl of Murray*, made a publick reference to the Lord by prayer in the heat of the conflict, to decide in the juſtneſs of their cauſe betwixt them and the adverſary, and a moſt ſurpriſing victory quickly followed. The *Earl of Huntly* was killed, who was next to the *Queen*, the moſt leading perſon to promote the Popiſh intereſt, and carried dead upon an horſe to the church in *Aberdeen*, where the *Lady Petſligo*, a grave and godly woman, amongſt others who came to ſee him, burſt out in amazement in theſe words. *What ſtability is there in human affairs. For this is his body here lying upon the ground in ſo poor and deſpicable a manner, who this very morning was by all judged the richeſt, wiſeſt, and moſt powerful of any of the nation.* 3. That memorable deliverance the church had a few years after, againſt the *Queen's* party at the battle of *Lang-ſide*, by that truly good Regent the *Earl of Murray*, where the Lord's

immediate deciſion might be diſcernible to all, whilſt the very Proteſtant intereſt there ſeemed to be at the ſtake, and in ſuch viſible hazard. 4. It was write in greateſt letters for after ages to notice, that ſtupendious judgment in the tragick cloſe of this *Queen*, who wanted not notable accompliſhments of nature, but had ſtill contended how to weaken the Proteſtant intereſt, yea, to divide and break them amongſt themſelves after her return from *France*.

Sect. 10. It is true, the ſufferings of the church of *Scotland*, reſiſting to blood for the truth, were not in ſuch meaſure then as in other churches, though theſe few, who were thus called to ſeal the truth and teſtimony of Chriſt, were moſt remarkably owned with his countenance: but theſe alſo would be conſidered. 1. How then the Lord did in an extraordinary way call his people to an active teſtimony, and with ſuch an immediate power on the ſpirits of all ranks, as put them in ſo ſhort a time in a capacity, for appearing againſt the cruel tyranny of their adverſaries, that to this preſent time it may be as a continued wonder before us. 2. We may ſee in what an other manner the Lord hath exerciſed his church there more than any other churches, with ſuch ſore continued conflicts upon the *Government of his houſe, and purity of worſhip*, that it may be truly ſaid, it hath been the lot of the church of *Scotland* to have a more continued wreſtling part with remarkably ſearching trials, than any of the churches abroad, and it may be ſaid, that the part and ſervice of his church peculiarly allotted her ſince the Reformation, hath been to contend for the crown and prerogative royal of Jeſus Chriſt as the ſupreme head and king over his church, and on this great intereſt have the trials of his people been moſt remarkably ſtated.

Sect. 11. Whilſt after the ſweet and comfortable calm the church had from that former bondage of Popery, there wanted now new aſſaults from ſuch, who ſought to invade the liberties of the kingdom of Chriſt there, and in a more ſubtil manner, with cloſſer approches followed the ſame; It was ſeen and may be inſtructing to this day, what viſible marks of judgment did the holy God put in the very entry of this trial on ſuch as did firſt adventure to bear down the liberties of the church there. As 1. The *Earl of Morton*, one otherwiſe of moſt excellent endowments, who had been zealous againſt Popery, but obſerveably ſwayed with that ſad predominant of *covetouſneſs*, which (whilſt he was Regent, to have ſome legal claim to the Biſhop's revenues) put him to eſſay ſome new mould for their eſtabliſhment, with ſome abridgment of their power, that thus by compact he and others of the nobility then might have a conſiderable ſhare of the church rents: but as both the end and midſes he followed for attaining thereto were ſinful, and this was the firſt aſſault to the government of the Reformation. We may ſee a remarkable beacon for after times in the holy judgment of the Lord ſet up thereon; in his being *thrown down, arraigned upon treaſon, beheaded, and his eſtate brought under forfaulture*, though not without ſome convincing evidences at his death of ſerious repentance; and then did he call to remembrance Mr. *Knox*'s laſt words to him whilſt he was on his death bed; *How the Lord had given him both wiſdom, riches and honour, and then was calling him to the government of the nation, (for at this time he was choſen Regent) and that he would be careful to improve theſe for the Lord and good of his church: but if otherwiſe aſſured him of a ſad fall, and that his end ſhould be ſhame and ignominy.* 2. It was upon his fall, that violent man the *Earl of Arran*, then got up to the publick government of the nation, whoſe great aim was, but with more rage and fury, than had been formerly eſſayed, to break the *government* of the church, and bring it in ſubordination to the civil magiſtrate; but in a few years did the righteous God ſo conſpicuouſly break him, as *he*

was enforced to fly from the court, and retire in disgrace, is put out off all publick trust, and at last upon the high-way, by a strange surprize of providence, was assaulted, and killed dead upon the place by my Lord Torthorrel, a friend of the late *Earl of Morton,* and in revenge of his death. And for these wretched church-men, who then vigorously concurred, in such an attempt, such as Mr. *John Douglas,* Mr. *Patrick Adamson,* with some others also that followed after, a signal remark of the holy judgment of the Lord, was then made as notour before the world, as their defection from the truth had been: But having given some account thereof elsewhere, I forbear now to touch it further.

Sect. 12. We may see in those times after the Reformation how there wanted not still some great and extraordinary instruments sent forth for the service of the church; of whom I have formerly given some account, as it might be clear to us of something from the Lord of an extraordinary and apostolick spirit with them; but since it is congruous to the present subject, and that I hope it may be for edification to the Reader; I shall yet add but some few passages more anent two of those instances, whom I have elsewhere touched. These great servants of Jesus Christ in their time, Mr. *Robert Bruce,* and Mr. *John Welch,* having such a convincing assurance of the truth thereof. 1. As to Mr. *Bruce,* after he had studied the laws in *France,* and was by his father's direction commanded after his return, to wait on the Court and Session for his affairs, there having a patent ensured for his being made one of the Lords of the Session, it was then the Lord began to work mightily upon his conscience, so as he could find no rest until he went to St. *Andrews* to Mr. *Andrew Melvin,* to study *Theology,* which his mother so much opposed, till he first denuded himself of some lands and casualties wherein he was infeft (his father at that time being a *Baron* of greatest quality in the nation) and thus did he willingly shake off all impediments, laying aside his court apparel, to follow the Lord. But whilst he was there, did not want some sharp conflicts in this matter, so as walking at a certain time in the fields with that holy man Mr. *James Melvin,* he said, *before I cast my self again in that torment of conscience, which I have had in resisting the call of God to the ministry, I would rather choose to pass through a fire of brimstone, were it half a mile long.* After he had been for the truth enforced to leave the country, (which was several years after this, and settling in the ministry) upon his return he was advertised by *Chancellor Seton,* of the kings express order to discharge him to preach, yet said, he would not use his authority, but only request him to desist for *nine or ten days,* which he consented to, thinking it was a small import for so short a time: but he quickly found, how deep the smallest ceding upon his masters interest may draw, so (as he shewed after) that *night his body was cast into a fever with the terror of his conscience, and he promised never to obey their commands any more.* The manner of his death I have elsewhere touched. He had much longing desires before that, for his change, so as sometimes he said, *I wonder how I am kept by my master so long here, since I have lived already two years in violence.* Meaning that he was then 72 years of age. From a grave and eminent minster of Christ, who was intimate with Mr. *Bruce,* I had this further account, how one day visiting him at his house, it was long before he came out of his study. But found by his face he had been weeping bitterly, and after told him some occasion of his grief, that having heard of the sharp sufferings of a godly minister of the gospel, in another country for the truth, yea upon the same account for which he had suffered confinement himself: He said, *If I had been faithful, I might have also shed some of my blood for Christ as well as he, but he hath got the crown from us all: And that my*

grief

grief was not for what befell that godly man, but for my ſelf. He had alſo related from him in private, a ſtrange dream: *How he had ſeen a great long book with black boards flying in the air, with many black fowls like crowes about the ſame, and as it toucked any of them, they fell down dead, upon which he heard a voice, which he ſaid, was as audible, as he then heard him ſpeak to him:* Hæc eſt ira Dei contra Paſtores Eccleſiæ Scoticanæ. *Whereupon he preſently fell a weeping, and crying to God, that he might be kept faithful, and not be one of thoſe, that were thus ſtruck down by a touch of his wrath, through deſerting the truth. And ſaid, when he awaked he found the pillow all wet, and drench'd with his tears.* This was at a remarkable time alſo of the defection of many miniſters there from the way of the Lord.

Sect. 13. This further account anent that famous ſervant of Chriſt, Mr. *John Welſh* to what hath been formerly publiſhed, I ſhall here give in ſome few particulars, which I hope may be confirming and edifying to the reader. 1. That witneſs he bore for the Lord, upon his journey to the aſſembly of the church at *Aberdeen*, whereon his after impriſonment and exile was ſtated; and about which he had been ſo much preſſed upon his ſpirit to go thither, for owning the liberties of the church, which ſo viſibly were then ſtruck at by the magiſtrate. His words I ſhall ſet down. 'Never a greater 'providence found I in my life-time, nor I found this laſt time in my jour-'ney: And here I thank my God for it, and I avow, that if this blood of 'mine ſhould go for it, it was acceptable ſervice we did to God that day. I 'know there were many, who ſent up their prayers to God for the mainte-'nance of this liberty of the church, which I am ſure the Lord heard. And 'I can ſay, the room was never yet that I came to, but I found the Lord 'meeting me there, and confirming that as acceptable to him, ſo as I never 'found a ſweeter providence ſince I was born, and ſees that the Lord's hand is 'not ſhortned. O *Scotland*, O that thou would repent and mourn for the 'contempt of ſo great a light, that hath ſhined in thee, thou ſhould'ſt ſee as 'glorious a day of the power of God in this *Iſland*, as ever was ſeen in any 'church before. What is it to the Lord? And let any think of it what they 'will, I know who has approved me, for it is the running of the goſpel thro' 'this whole *Iſland*, and that the net of Chriſt may be ſpread over all, that if it 'were poſſible we may fang in a world into it, that they might not periſh, is 'that which we ſeek. And when I look to that eternity of wrath abiding 'the wicked, I muſt ſay, who would not pity a world of ſinners'. This was preached by him at *Air*, a very little before his impriſonment, which having occaſion to ſee, as it was written from his own mouth, I thought truly worthy of remark, and to ſet down here. 2. As alſo that teſtimony he gave in publick againſt that great aſſault, the church was then meeting with from *Prelacy*. 'I know there will come a ſhaking time, and the glory of the 'world will bewitch many, but tell me, received ye the ſpirit of God by 'his lordly miniſtry of the *Prelate*, or by the pure miniſtry of his ſervants? 'And ſhall we *begin in the ſpirit and end in the fleſh?* This truth we have 'believed, profeſſed and ſubſcribed, the King and nobility abjuring alſo and con-'demning that wicked hierarchy of the church. This is a thing that hath been 'ſpoken long ſince, that there behoved to be a trial in *Scotland*. If this new 'erected domination be it, leave it to the Lord; but if ever I had familiarity 'with him, and if ever his ſpirit ſealed any part of the ſcripture to me, the 'purity of the goſpel, and kingdom that hath been in this *Iſland*, was from 'God. And that this new erected kingdom of *Prelacy* is not from him, was 'ſealed to my conſcience, and thoſe are names of *blaſphemy*, (for I count 'him a blaſphemer, who takes to him the proper ſtiles that belong to the 'Lord)

'Lord) ſince there is but *one Lord*, and ye ſhall not be called ſuch, ſaith 'Chriſt to his *diſciples*, *but if any deſire to be great, let him be your ſervant.* 'Is it not the mark of the Woman cloathed with the ſun, that is perſecuted in 'the wilderneſs, and has the moon under her feet? but it is the mark of the 'Beaſt, that ſpeaks blaſphemies againſt God, and makes war with the ſaints'. 3. Some predictions he then had of what was to come, were indeed remarkable, as he expreſſed in publick, near the ſame time, where he thus ſpeaks. 'Prepare you for croſſes, for I am thinking there is ſomething to follow on 'this falling of the ſtars to the earth, and that theſe golden apples are offered 'to miniſters, and men are become earthly minded, who were wont to be 'capable of ſpiritual things, there muſt be a fiery trial to follow with it, *and* '*at another.* There is a ſword coming, which ſhall be drunk with blood, 'the Lord knows from whence it ſhall come, but I cannot be quit of it, but 'that this land, which is defiled with blood, muſt be cleanſed with blood a-'gain; but if we could be humbled, and run to God by prayer, it may be, 'he would ſend peace in our days. Remember this poor Church, that's like 'to be brought under with their masked and men ſworn abominations, which 'are creeping in piece and piece. Remember theſe things with tears, and I 'am aſſured, that the Lord ſhall ſend as glorious a deliverance to this church, 'as was ever heard of'. Theſe few notes, having ſuch aſſurance of the truth thereof, I thought worthy to be noticed. That teſtimony he gives alſo to the croſs of Chriſt after his *exile*, in a letter to my *Lady Marr* out of *France*; having the ſame by me, I ſhall here touch. 'I thank my God in Chriſt, for 'all the gracious conſolation it pleaſeth him to vouchſafe on me in the days 'of my affliction, whereby I perceive the good pleaſure of his will to miniſter unto me comfort, that not only with patience, but with joy I may bear 'his croſs, and I dare not but give teſtimony, that the Lord has been faithful 'in his promiſes, and has remembred his mercy and covenant towards me, 'has made his *yoke eaſy and his burthen light*, and has made his conſolations abound, far beyond all that ever I yet ſuffered. It's true it cannot but 'be ſometimes grievous, to remember the glory that I have ſeen both in 'publick and private in the communion of the ſaints, from which I am exiled, yet it pleaſeth my Lord to miniſter ſuch tranquility of mind unto me, 'that I cannot but wonder of, and of theſe exceeding great and incredible 'joys, and wherewith I now ſee by experience it pleaſes him to accompany 'his own croſs. O how ſweet a thing it is to ſuffer for Chriſt! how glorious and rich treaſures are there, that lie hid under that vile and ignominious 'vail of the croſs. The world yea the princes and wiſe of this world, know 'not the glorious and unſpeakable joys, that are joyned with the croſs, yea 'who knows it but he that hath experience thereof? Certainly if the adverſary knew what joy it were to the children of God, to be under the croſs, 'inſtead of being inſtruments thereof, they ſhould envy them for ſo great a 'good. Bleſſed be my Lord, that ever it was his will, and that it entred in his 'heart, thus to make manifeſt his love to me, and to vouchſafe this grace, 'in cauſing me to ſuffer for his names ſake ſo much. I thank my God in 'Chriſt, for unto me it's a ſure argument of his accounting me worthy of 'that kingdom, for the which he hath cauſed me with ſome gladneſs and joy 'to ſuffer, and for the which to give ſome readineſs to ſuffer more; ſurely 'affliction is a teſtimony and ſeal of the love of God'.

Sect. 14. In this hour of trial then on the church of *Scotland*, when *Prelacy* was making ſo formidable an aſſault, it is truly worthy remark, and to be tranſmitted to after times, with what zeal and ſeriouſneſs the faithful miniſters of Chriſt then were concerned to ſtand in the breach, as interceſſors

betwixt an highly provoked God, and his people, under whose hand so great a ruin was like to fall, which in two instances, (besides many else might be given) I shall touch, having such assured evidence of the truth, and certainty thereof. 1. In the Year 1596. upon *Tuesday* the thirtieth of *March*, The ministers and other commissioners of the *General Assembly met at Edenburgh*, found it duty by themselves to conveen in the church at nine a clock. One of the doors being shut, and the other kept open for the meeting only; for humbling themselves and wrestling with God, to pursue a national, as well as a personal reconciliation, the whole number amounting to *four hundred* of ministers and some select christians and elders of the church with them. Where after prayer, and Mr. *John Davidson*, (whose life I have elsewhere touched,) chosen to preside amongst them, he caused the *third* and *thirty fourth chapters of Ezekiel* to be read, and then said; Seeing it had pleased 'the Lord to move them to choose him, who was the unworthiest and unmeetest of the number for that place, of a preacher that day, they were not 'to look that he came to be censured by them, but to use the authority of a 'teacher, as to hearers, without any prejudice to that liberty given them of 'the Lord, to try the spirits, whether they be of God or not. He shewed, 'what was the end of their meeting, that it was the confession of sins, and 'to promise a forsaking thereof, to turn unto the Lord, and enter into a new 'covenant and league with him, that thus by repentance they might be the 'meeter to provoke others to the same'. In which he was followed with that power for moving of their spirits in application, that within an hour after they were entred into the church, they look'd with another countenance than that wherewith they entered. And whilst he exhorted them to that retired work of meditation and acknowledgment of their sins, whilst then together, for the space of a quarter of an hour, they were thus humbling themselves, yea such a joint concurrence with those sighs and groans, and with shedding of tears amongst the most, every one provoking another by their example, and the teacher himself by his, so as the very church resounded, and that place might worthily be called *Bochim*, for the like of that day had not been seen in *Scotland*, since the Reformation, after prayer and publick confession, he treated upon that scripture, *Luke* xii. 22. wonderfully assisted by the spirit of the Lord for the work, both of casting down and raising up, which exercise continued, till near one a clock afternoon. And when they were to dissolve, they did there solemnly join, and enter into a new league and covenant with God, holding up their hands thereto, with that seriousness and weight, as was a moving sight to all present. And that afternoon by the *General Assembly*, was the renewing of the covenant in particular Synods concluded.

Sect. 15. At the *Synod of Fife* met at *Dumfermlin May* 12, 1596. where Mr. *James Melvin* did preside as *Moderator*. The articles for *reformation* of the church set down in the last Assembly were read in publick, and ordained to be insert, and thereafter did Mr. *Melvin* gravely discourse upon the *last chapter of Joshuah*, with that evidence and demonstration of the power of God therewith, as all who were there were enforced to a strange and unusual motion, with groans and tears, yea then to some retired personal meditation for searching each of them their own ways. And after some time did he make publick confession in name of the rest, of unthankfulness, negligence, coldness of spirit, instability, unsuitableness in speech and conversation, as too visibly fashioned after the world, yea thus with trembling and weeping, for the misusage of so honourable a calling, and the fear and dread of that weight of the wrath of God lying over them, for the blood of so many

souls

ſouls belonging to their charge, did then weep bitterly, and pour out their ſouls before the Lord, pleading for grace, and an effectual help to be ſtrengthned againſt theſe evils. After which, the Lord having been ſo marvelouſly preſent, a minute of this ſolemn work was by conſent of the *Synod* to be inſert, both for their own uſe, and an example to poſterity in the publick Regiſter.

CHAP. VII.

SECT. 1. HAVING ſome occaſion to touch this ſubject of the Lords marvelous appearances for the *Church in Scotland*, in that great work of Reformation from Popery, wherein I deſigned only but a ſhort account, which otherwiſe, were it followed, ſhould be a work by it ſelf. Before I leave this; I hope it may not be unſuitable to ſpeak a few words concerning the preſent ſtate of the *church* of Chriſt there, which with ſome confidence, as before the Lord, I may ſay, is far from the bitterneſs of the ſpirit, prejudice at the perſons of any, or intended reflection that way: But for the truth's ſake, upon which the trials of his people have been ſo remarkably there ſtated, which in ſome few *particulars*, I hope *in the words of truth, and ſoberneſs*; I ſhall here offer.

SECT. 2. *Firſt*, It is known, how very ſad, as to all viſible appearances, the caſe of the church there hath been and now is, by the bleſſed diſpoſal of the Lord, whoſe ways are holy and juſt, and thus graciouſly ſees fit to aſſign a different lot and ſervice, not only to ſeveral ages, but to particular churches; he hath in faithfulneſs put this cup of trial and affliction in his peoples hand; and now for *ſixteen years* paſt hath a moſt remarkably ſuffering time gone over their head, not as to the miniſters there only, who found grace to abide faithful, and *keep the word of his patience* in this hour of great temptation: But moſt univerſally through the whole land, to chriſtians of all ranks and conditions, yea in ſuch a manner, with that frequency of aſſaults, as I judge, if a particular account were given, it could hardly be credited at a diſtance; and which is aſtoniſhing, that no length of time, no appearances of the Lord, nor theſe moſt obvious remarks the adverſary might have had of his hand being againſt them, both in their Councils and actings for this end, have yet been a lett thereto; but at this day their violence ſeems to be a length beyond all that hath formerly been, and the waters to grow without any diſcernible abatement thereof, yea I muſt ſay, ſuch a *perſecution* under theſe circumſtances is now followed; as cannot eaſily find a *parallel* from any times paſt.

SECT. 3. For the cauſe and grounds hereof, though it may be judged, that few at a diſtance are ſo unconcerned, with whom the Proteſtant intereſt hath any regard, as not to enquire and know, why the Reformed church of *Scotland* ſhould be thus expoſed to theſe ſore and continued ſufferings, (nor hath there hitherto wanted ſome ſerious endeavours for clearing of this to the world) yet I may ſay, (under ſome weight of preſent duty, and I hope it may not be unſeaſonable, or unneceſſary) am preſſed to give this ſhort account to any, who enquire, and would deſign an eſtabliſhment of their ſpirit in the way of the Lord, *That in oppoſition to* Prelacy, *ſo expreſly contrary to the rule of the ſcripture, and in adherence to this cauſe and truth, that Jeſus Chriſt is a King, and hath a kingdom and government in his church diſtinct from the kingdoms of the world, or any civil government there. A truth, to which he did himſelf ſo expreſly bear witneſs, and ſealed with his blood, and for ſtanding faſt by theſe dearly purchaſed liberties thereof, hath this*

this ſad and long continued perſecution of his church and people there been obſervably ſtated. Nor can this be ſtrange that ſuch as ever knew the fellowſhip of the croſs of Chriſt, and what it was to have their ſoul under the power and authority of the truth, ſhould be found ſo tenacious and peremptory in their teſtimony to ſo great a piece of his intereſt, whilſt it is now called for in the ſeaſon thereof, yea to rejoice in their ſufferings upon ſuch an account, when theſe are ſo undeniably clear, about which I may ſay, (not of late) I have ſought to have my own ſpirit perſwaded.

1. That the great *Lawgiver and Head of his church* doth ſo expreſly diſcharge all *Lordſhip and Dominion* over his church, yea therewith alſo all titles of honour to be aſſumed by them, not to theſe only who by his inſtitution are fixed officers of his houſe, until his coming, but even to his Apoſtles, who then were extraordinary Officers, both as to their calling and endowments in the church, as is *clear*, *Luke* xxii. 24, 25. *Matth.* xx. 25.

2. That it is manifeſt, the government of the church under the *New Teſtament* is ſo evidently *Ariſtocratick*, with a parity amongſt the officers of Chriſt in the adminiſtration of their power, and a ſubordination of the leſſer parts to the greater, and for this that apoſtolick pattern and practice held forth for after ages ſo expreſs, and which ſo clearly holds out not only what was *de facto* their *practice*; but as *a rule* binding *de jure* to the church, and a piece of the word written for our inſtruction, to be kept till the *ſecond coming of Chriſt*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 4. yea on ſuch moral and perpetual grounds is held forth, as in *Acts* xv. and other ſcriptures, convincingly clear.

3. That it is manifeſt, (and I judge few can be ſo groſly ignorant amongſt the adverſaries themſelves to debate this;) that the name, office, qualifications and ordination of a *Biſhop* held forth in the word, hath no reſpect further, than to all the miniſters of the goſpel, and that a *Biſhop*, which in the original is an *overſeer of the flock* only, and a preaching *Presbyter*, is one and the ſame office, for as the one holds forth *ejus induſtriam*, ſo the other *Sapientiæ maturitatem.* which I leave to any to conſider in comparing theſe ſcriptures. *Act.* xx. 28. 1 *Pet.* i. 2. *Phil.* i. 1. *Tit.* i. 5. conſidered with *v.* 7.

4. That it is demonſtratively clear, Jeſus Chriſt hath power of the keys for diſcipline and government, *in foro externo*, and where that ſcripture *gradation* is ſo obſerveable for the church's edification in the way of diſcipline and cenſures; that it is *from one to two or more*, and from them to the church, as *Matth.* xviii. 15, 16. Likewiſe from a leſſer to an higher judicatory, as *Act.* xv. whilſt on the contrary by this eſtabliſhment of *Prelacy* the courſe is viſibly retrograde from many to one, in whom the final deciſion muſt reſt. And it is ſure, if the rule of the written word have weight, the government of the church under the *New Teſtament* is committed not to one, but to a plurality of Presbyters, who are not only to feed, but to overſee by an expreſs appointment of the Holy Ghoſt, *Act.* xx. 28. Yea, the higheſt acts of juriſdiction, ſuch as *Excommunication* is committed to the church and ordinary officers thereof, we may ſee *Matth.* xviii. 16, 17. 1 *Cor.* v. 4. Yea, how this was not practiſed by one, but by many, 2 *Cor.* ii. 6. *That cenſure being inflicted by many*, &c. as alſo the power of *Ordination*, 1 Tim. iv. 14. which was to *be by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*, ſo as both the *keys* of doctrine and diſcipline are expreſly committed to the community of Preſbyters, without giving the greateſt *Prelate*, that ever claimed ſuch a title, any room by himſelf there.

5. In all the *New Teſtament* ſuch an *office* as this of *Prelacy* diſtinct from an ordinary Paſtor, cannot poſſibly be found, but whilſt that *roll* and *catalogue* of the officers of the church of Chriſt, and their qualifications, even to the

office

office of a *Deacon*, is ſo expreſs, both as to ordinary and extraordinary officers is clear, 1 *Cor.* xii. 28. *Eph.* iv. 11. 12. There can be found no ſuch office of ſcripture and apoſtolick inſtitution here, as a *Biſhop* over his pretended *Dioceſe:* and I hope it is not under debate, that the ſcripture and pattern of the apoſtolick church is more ancient and authentick, than any practice of after times, whilſt the ſtreams began early to be polluted, and this myſtery of iniquity in that pretended *Hierarchy* and precedency in the church did even in the days of the apoſtles begin to ſtir.

6. It is clear that whatever of a *double honour* by the ſcripture is given and allowed to *Officers* of the church; is upon no ground of *preheminence in juriſdiction:* but their *labouring in the word and doctrine*, 1 *Tim.* v. 17. which I judge is an act, whereon no *Prelate* will challenge a ſingularity above the ordinary Paſtors of the church, nor upon that ground, *Mal.* ii. 7. *that the prieſts lips ſhould preſerve knowledge*, who account the preaching of the word ſo far below the grandeur of their office, except at ſome extraordinary and feſtival time.

7. As there is a beautiful order in the chriſtian church, which we may ſee in theſe extraordinary officers of Chriſt, his Apoſtles then had above ordinary paſtors, whoſe endowments alſo were extraordinary for that time, which I judged no *Biſhop* can claim to; yet is there no ſuch thing, in an office of the ſame kind, as a majority of power or priority of degree, not an *Apoſtle*, or one *Evangeliſt* above another; or one *Deacon* above another: and ſhould there be only in the office of miniſters an inequality? It is ſure the ſcripture hath no ſuch warrant for inverting ſuch an excellent order.

8. And is it not on the ſame ground of an expedience and warrantableneſs of a *Biſhop* over a *Dioceſe*, or a *Primate* over a national church, for preſerving unity, that by undeniable conſequence an *Univerſal Biſhop* over all the churches muſt follow, as a gradual difference betwixt them: Yea, how the *Romiſh Hierarchy* did firſt begin there, it may be demonſtrably evident.

9. If that power given to the officers of the church of Chriſt be alone miniſterial, to declare and execute his will, and but one Lord over his houſe, it muſt then be undeniable, that *Prelacy* is inconſiſtent therewith, which is ſo clear an incroaching on his *Regal* and *Deſpotical power*, as maſter over his houſe. And it is remarkable, how the Apoſtle *Peter*, on whom any ſuch claim of *Hierarchy* in the church hath been firſt founded, is ſo expreſs, 1 *Pet.* v. 3. *Not as being Lords over Gods heritage, but examples to the flock.*

10. Doth not this *office* viſibly bring therewith a confounding two diſtinct *Juriſdictions* and callings in one perſon, as it is incompatible with the kingdom of Chriſt, which is *ſpiritual and not of this world*, ſo alſo with the condition of his ſervants, who are not to entangle themſelves with the affairs of this life; but give *themſelves to the word and prayer*, ſo as the Apoſtles counted even the ſervice of tables, and adminiſtring to the poor extrinſick to their proper work and calling.

11. Beſides, that the ſad and undeniable experience of this way, as deſtructive to the church, and that which is the end of the church government, the edification of the body, doth not this of its own nature moſt evidently tend to bring in ambition into the church? Againſt which the *Apoſtle John* with ſuch indignation ſpeaks in his ſecond epiſtle, v. 9. in the perſon of *Diotrephus*, to give looſe rains to prophanity, whilſt that which ſhould be the proper work of many to overſee, (*and who is ſufficient for theſe things*) is here put wholly over upon one, and but a ſhaddow thereof left to inferior officers.

12. And can it be ſtrange, that all who truly loves the truth there, ſhould with ſuch ſeriouſneſs be preſt in their adherence to the government of Chriſt in his church, which they know to be that good and old way, wherein ſo innumerable a company of moſt known, tender, ſolid and lively chriſtians, ſince that bleſſed Reformation of the church there from Popery, *have received the ſpirit*, and been *ſealed* to the day of Redemption: Yea, have found ſuch abounding comforts of the Holy Ghoſt to their teſtimony, and ſuffering upon this intereſt, and which alſo hath had ſo eminent an atteſtation, by the converſion as well as building up of many thouſands now taken up into glory, *and pillars in his temple, where they ſhall no more go out.* Yea, ſuch a piece of the truth of Chriſt, to which ſo great a witneſs hath been born, by many of the moſt eminent ſervants of the Lord, of whom in ſobriety I may ſay, there hath not been greater known to the church, ſince the times of the Apoſtles, by whoſe wreſtlings, prayers, tears and ſufferings, it hath been through the good hand of the Lord upon them, tranſmitted to us, and which is not our intereſt alone, but a truſt we ſtand under to poſterity.

I ſhall but further add that indiſpenſible obligation the churches of Chriſt in *Britain* and *Ireland* more peculiarly now ſtand under, by the *oath* and *covenant of God*, which though it were in a thing indifferent, ſhould be determining, how much more when this ſolemn tie is but ſuperadded to that, which in it ſelf doth ſo clearly, and on moral grounds, bind and oblige?

Sect. 4. It may be matter of aſtoniſhment how much the ſufferings of the *church of Scotland*, have been heightned and now are, by the adventuring of the miniſters of Chriſt there, upon the authority of their maſter, to preach the goſpel amongſt the people, notwithſtanding of the magiſtrates diſcountenance and prohibition: When both a convincing neceſſity, and their longing deſires to hear did enforce a call hereto; yea, how this ſhould be challenged in a land, where the ſcripture and doctrine of the reformed religion is not publickly diſowned. It hath been far from the leaſt intended irritation to provoke any, much leſs the magiſtrate, I can ſay with the furtheſt aſſurance and would judge, that the adverſaries themſelves do allow theſe ſo far the uſe and exerciſe of reaſon, nor can want ſome enforcing conviction of this on their conſcience; that they would not expoſe themſelves to ſuch viſible hazard, labour, wearineſs, with many preſſing difficulties that way, yea, with ſo little of any known outward encouragement, if ſome greater intereſt did not preponderate it, which ſhould lie more near than all enjoyments in the earth: That it is the ſervice of their bleſſed maſter, for which nothing muſt be too dear, ſo as they *may finiſh their courſe with joy, and this miniſtry which they have received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the goſpel of the grace of God.* But ſince many upon miſtake, or at a diſtance may be prejudged, or put to ſome enquiry here anent: I hope it ſhall not be found unneceſſary to give this ſhort touch, what preſſing conſtraint of duty the miniſters of Chriſt there are under, for adventuring thus, and on grounds ſo convincingly clear. 1. That it is a matter of *confeſſion*, as to their miniſtery and the authority thereof from Jeſus Chriſt alone, though in a mediate way by the church, and upon an hazard greater than all the kings of the earth can threaten, which is not their's to ſubject unto the civil power, yea, with this further enforcement thereto, that this reſtraint now put upon them to exerciſe their miniſtry is expreſly owned by virtue of that *ſupremacy*, aſſumed by the magiſtrate over all *church cauſes*, *as well as perſons*, and as being the fountain of church power: A claim, which without the furtheſt of blaſphemy, is incommunicable to angels or men, which is the alone prerogative of the Son of God, the head and builder of his church. 2. That their miniſtry both

in

in its office and exercise comes under no sentence of the civil magistrate, whatever subjection they own as to their persons and outward concerns: Nor can a restraint be put upon them here, to make void that authority and warrant they have from Jesus Christ, and conveyed by his church; but as an ecclesiastick censure. 3. That it is clear the great commission, wherewith they are cloathed to preach the gospel, bounds them to no particular place, but their primary relation is such to the church universal, so as whereever they be, and upon an evident call they stand there related, as the ministers of Christ to dispense his ordinances. 4. And is it not morally binding and of force to the times of the *New Testament*, as well as of the *Old, that the priests lips should preserve knowledge and the people to seek the law at their mouth as the messengers of the Lord of Hosts*, Mal. i. 7. Yea, should be the more pressing at such a day, when evident hazard is to many from *Atheism, Quakerism* and *Popery:* and many also ready to faint under the pressures of an afflicting time: How onerous and pressing a duty it is *to comfort the feeble-minded, to support the weak*, 1 *Thes.* v. 14. to draw forth the breasts to the hungry, unto whom the ordinances of Christ are suited to be as their very natural food, and have such continued need to be confirmed thereby. 5. Yea, it is under a greater penalty than any magistrate can threaten. They stand accountable for discharge of that talent, given them of the Lord, *with a necessity laid upon them, to preach the gospel of Christ*, 1 Cor. ix. 16. Who have their master's eye continually upon them, how they answer to that power and trust committed to his ministers; that in season and out of season they should follow their work and no latitude here for subjecting it to human rules, where the great Law-giver hath given forth his mind. 6. No contempt of the magistrates authority or just power can be obtruded in this matter, except they own it upon this, that the ministers of the gospel in *Scotland* dare admit no unlimited, or implicite obedience to their acts; but with a preference herein to the express commands of their master, and whether it be better to obey God than man, (if they own subjection to the scripture) let their own conscience then judge. 7. It is sure, no such debate was in the primitive times of the church, whilst the Roman Emperors, (though heathen) were in things lawful owned and subjected to, as the magistrate, when the ministers of Christ then, in opposition to all their Edicts, and greatest fury of persecution, ceased not to preach the gospel, yea, and this way, (that is now called so irregular and seditious) was not the christian church, for the first two Centuries, with such marvelous appearance of the power of God, brought in and built up? And as it is the same truth and doctrine which is now preached, I hope that with much confidence we may own the same scope to prejudge none, much less the magistrates in their right; but to pursue the treatry of the gospel, with all seriousness for their embracing that great offer of reconciliation by Christ, and to press the indispensably necessary study of holiness. But if magistrates this day in being christians pretend some higher power and authority, I hope they must take themselves to the Bible for this warrant, and shew if they have such power given, pretend what they will, which is destructive to the truth and to counteract the express institutions of Jesus Christ in his word. Oh how sad and astonishing is it, that when the great lawgiver and head of his church hath given princes and rulers so fully their due, and established their rights, they will thus dare to rob him of his, and keep no bounds nor marches with the kingdom of Christ, but will thus break over to invade his interest: *who must reign until all his enemies be made his footstool*, and assuredly will carry back the war on themselves, and in his blessed time appear against such evil neighbours, as will not *be wise, and instructed* this day, *who are the judges of the*

earth, and ſee theſe dreadful marks have been of an holy avenging God, in the quarrel of his church upon the greateſt kingdoms and ſtates. 8. This great truſt committed to the miniſters of the goſpel is not theirs only; but the intereſt of the poſterity and generations to come, to ſtand cloſe by the truth, and theſe dear bought liberties of the kingdom of Chriſt. 9. I muſt further add, that convincing and undeniable ſeal the Lord hath given to his own ordinances, and miniſtry of his ſervants now *of late*, when under moſt viſible threatnings and diſcountenance of the magiſtrate is ſuch, as this continued and amazing *oppoſition* thereto ſeems to be a more than ordinary counteracting of light, and *doing deſpite even to the ſpirit of grace* under ſuch clear evidences of his work.

Sect. 5. I muſt further add, in giving ſome account of the preſent ſtate of the church in *Scotland*, now amidſt theſe ſad and aſtoniſhing times, which have of late gone over her, how demonſtratively manifeſt this is, if our eyes be not in a ſtrange manner withheld from conſidering the work of God, and his appearances in mercy, as well as judgment, *that he hath not forſaken his church and people there, nor doth his truth and tenderneſs fail:* But is ſuch, as we may this day with no leſs aſtoniſhment ſee, yea, to arreſt our eyes herewith, in the great *reſtoring providences of this time*, than of ſuch as have been hitherto moſt breaking: and the gain thereof, for all that is come, which I fear not to ſay, hath a viſible proportion to the greateſt ſufferings and loſs; yea, rather to exceed the ſame. And whilſt we wait and wonder, that the holy God comes not our way, who are thus too ready to ſtint our thoughts by limiting of him, he calls us to ſee him meeting his people another way, beyond all they ever could have thought of. This being a duty of ſuch weight, and that with ſome evident ſuitableneſs falls in with the preſent ſubject, to obſerve the great things of the Lord for his church: yea, a duty (could we be faithful therein) which wants not a promiſe to have more given in, and laid to our hands for obſervation. I ſhall but in a few words touch ſome convincing and memorable providences for his church there, as ſome part of that rent and teſtimony of theſe ſad ſuffering times, to the way of the Lord.

1. This witneſs we muſt bear to what in theſe times he hath done for his church there, and the greateſt *Atheiſts* may ſee, that not in an ordinary way of providence hath her intereſt and preſervation been hitherto carried on: But whilſt all viſible advantages were on the adverſaries ſide, their enmity at ſuch a height, nor their will wanting to their power, yea, with ſuch frequent aſſaults and different methods for a breaking of his poor church, which we have ſeen with our eyes; yet is this truth ſure, *perſecuted, but not forſaken: caſt down, but not deſtroyed:* the church ſinking, but not periſhed, and amidſt the flame, but not conſumed, to witneſs that her God lives, and is ſtill the ſame, yea, doth own the ſame intereſt and cauſe; though his appearance now be in another manner.

2. We have yet ſeen, if we would ſeriouſly obſerve, no remarkable concurrence of ſad and cruſhing things have been from the Lord for his peoples trial, but with ſome obvious tendency thereof to as manifold an uſe and advantage, whilſt in this, human reaſon could never have ſuppoſed what hath been the product of theſe ſtrange times, or have judged the concluſion by the premiſes.

3. In this time we have been called to that great appearance of the Lord againſt his adverſaries in their breaking, turning them out of their places, who had firſt moved, as the great leading inſtruments to bring in *Prelacy*, and for breaking, ſo far as they could, the church of *Scotland*, and cauſe ſo ſad a ruin there. Yea, how this was in ſo ſhort a time when leaſt expected, that diverſe

of them had not three years together, to enjoy that ſad conqueſt they had ſought, to found on the ruins of the work of God there, and ſhare in that ſpoil, which with ſuch confidence they had then divided amongſt them. What I write hereof, with ſome confidence I may ſay, is with no prejudice to the perſons of ſuch, but ſhould own the more tenderneſs and compaſſion to any, when once brought low: But ſince the holy judgment of the Lord, and his glory herein is ſo eminently concerned, and that this convincing witneſs to the truth hath been written in greateſt letters for the obſervation of the age, I could not paſs it without ſome remark; yea, to bring the remembrance thereof before others, who will adventure to follow that way, on which the holy God hath ſet up ſo remarkable a beacon before their eyes. Oh, that ſuch would conſider, what reward theſe have got, who ſo vigorouſly then acted for the *Prelatick* intereſt in *Scotland*, and how the foundation of it was laid in the viſible ruin of ſuch, as were the greateſt promoters thereof, as a publick warning from the Lord againſt ſuch a way, and that the curſe then of *Hiel* the *Bethelite*, for building of that accurſed place, againſt which the Lord ſerved ſuch an interdiction, hath not there fallen to the ground, and I am perſwaded ſhall be made more remarkable yet in the cloſe: Yea, how that great man, who then acted in the higheſt place and authority, ſhould at laſt after ſo remarkable a fall, die in a remote place of the world, and in a kind of exile, (whatever cover it had,) who turned ſo many of the godly, both miniſters and others from their dwellings, and ſome moſt eminent from their own land, and dipt his hand in the blood of ſome faithful and choice witneſſes to his truth. And his death by ſo ſtrange a fall, and in that aſtoniſhing manner circumſtantiate, as hath been ſhewed by ſome who were then in the place. It's true, the judgments of the Lord are a great depth, and with much fear and ſobriety ſhould we adventure to apply the ſame: but there may be no leſs to fear unfaithfulneſs in our being not more obſervers thereof, when in ſuch legible characters they are oft written, ſo as all who run may read.

4. That publick witneſs, which hath in theſe times been given to the truth and cauſe, (on which the church there is ſuffering) by ſome at their death, who did before vigorouſly oppoſe themſelves thereto, as it is an evidence of the Lord's eminent appearance, and dominion he exerciſeth over the conſciences of men, is a ſeal alſo to his truth, with the dying breath of ſuch who were once known haters thereof, which ſhould call for a grave remark. There have not wanted ſignal inſtances hereof: But amongſt others publickly known and notour, I ſhall give this general touch of two *gentlemen* of conſiderable *note*, and intereſt in the *Nation*; the one in the *Weſt* ſome years ago, the other but of late in the *South*, whoſe conſciences were moſt remarkably ſeized on by the dread and terror of God, to the amazement and inſtruction of all about them, moſt eſpecially for their being involved in the publick defection of the time, and for concurrence in the *abjuration* of the *covenant*, which after much wreſtling with tears, whilſt the pain and anguiſh of their ſpirits was diſcernibly above their ſickneſs, they did then witneſs, how above all, this guilt did moſt preſſingly touch them, and lay in the way betwixt their ſouls and peace with God: Yea, with all ſerioufneſs beſeeching others not to adventure on that which drew ſo deep on their conſciences! though I muſt alſo add, they were not thus more publick inſtructors to the *Nation*, how dreadful it is to give the intereſts of the church a wrong touch, than examples of the freedom and riches of grace.

5. We have ſeen a change of weapons the adverſary hath made, for having a ſnare thus laid in ambuſh, and with a ſmiling face, whilſt adder's poiſon was

under their lips; but yet ſo as the bait with their furtheſt care could not hide the hook, but that the Lord graciouſly hath ſtill helped to ſome clear diſcerning, and advertence thereto, even whilſt the net was moſt cloſely ſpread under their feet: Yea, that moſt dreadful eſſay, that ever they followed, (with *Balak*) to lay a ſtumbling block in the church's way for her halting, as the moſt aſſured means to prevail, and divide the godly amongſt themſelves, hath been in ſome meaſure, through the good hand of the Lord made void, and I truſt ſhall be yet more, by ſome cloſe uniting of his peoples hearts there together, and with a more watching and jealous eye over the plauſible inſinuations of ſuch, who are the known adverſaries of the truth. Nor can it be paſt without a remark of the righteous God's recompenſing them with breaches of another kind.

6. The tried faith and eſtabliſhment of his people in this ſearching time, is again beyond the ſaddeſt loſs we can reckon on, 1 *Pet.* i. 7. *That the trial of your faith, which is more precious than that of gold, may be to the praiſe, honour and glory at the appearance of Jeſus Chriſt,* anent which their enemies have been found liars, who had reckoned e'er now to break and faint them from their duty. And it is ſure, the more ſharp and ſhaking a trial is, it is ſo much the more one of thoſe rare opportunities of a chriſtian's life to be ſeriouſly followed, that it be not loſt: Yea, which, with ſome proportion to the meaſure thereof, ſhould bring in more abundant joy and peace, than any loſe or grief that hath gone before. And is ſuch an account, that through grace hath been given to this church there, to be ſmall in our eyes?

7. That honourable teſtimony given to the croſs of Chriſt by ſo many ſuffering witneſſes, to the conviction and aſtoniſhment of their adverſaries is ſuch (could an account be particularly given of what hath been remarkable and publick this way) as ſhould be a ſweet and large record for confirming others in the truth: How they never knew divine ſtrength more ſenſibly, and the power of Chriſt reſting on them, than when called to ſuffer for his name, and were moſt preſſed above their own ſtrength, that there is under the croſs a length beyond report, or teſtimony of others to be known, what ſweet hours of fellowſhip with God are to be then found; yea, whilſt ſomething more than ordinary allowance did then wait upon it, and what company the ſcripture hath been ſometimes in a priſon; or their neceſſary retirement from others, through the violence of theſe times, beyond all they ever knew hereof before.

8. We have ſeen alſo the truth then have a moſt diſcernible triumph when the adverſary ſeemed moſt to prevail; yea, thus to gain that intereſt by a ſuffering teſtimony thereto even on a ſcaffold, ſo as the begun fall of *Prelacy*, and moſt remarkable ſpreading of the kingdom of Chriſt through the land might be ſeen to follow, yea, that which would have looked as hopeleſs and an irrecoverable ſtroak, of which in an ordinary way none could ſee a comfortable outgate thereof to have a moſt effectual tendency to the church's greateſt advantage.

9. We have ſeen theſe marvellous providences, which have followed the *church* there in ſuch remarkably ſad and trying times, that when it looked as a winter ſeaſon, then ſhould the ſpring break up, and the wilderneſs bloſſom, by ſo great an increaſe to the church, beyond all that had formerly been ſeen, when outward things did moſt ſmile: A people formed for the Lord, and made willing in the day of his power to follow him in theſe parts, where but a few years before, and whilſt no viſible diſtreſs did then lie in the way, a few ſerious chriſtians would have been a ſign and a wonder to all about them. Yea, how thus the church hath been fed under the rod, and the ſcattering of the miniſters

of

of Chriſt through the land by the violence of theſe times, to have tended more for the ſpreading of the goſpel, than could ever in an ordinary way have been looked for in their former ſtate. Oh! are our eyes ſhut, ſo as not to ſee this marvelous work of the Lord, which he hath brought about in theſe times, which without a ſtrange inadvertence may be ſeen to be the immediate finger of God, and ſomething above all ſecond cauſes, how ſuch a death-like wound ſhould make way for ſo bleſſed and effectual an healing, yea, which may be a comforting preſage of ſome excellent building yet of his houſe there, by ſuch a preparing of materials for the ſame?

10. Thus hath the Lord appeared there in this time, to cauſe a ſuffering lot be the firſt means to enter and fix ſome moſt remarkably in his way, and for a ſerious owning of the truth, than which nothing upon any ordinary grounds raiſed, could have been leſs hoped: and thus their hearts gained and pulled in by that means, whereon ſo many have ſtumbled and broke, that ſurely it may be ſeen, this muſt be an immediate touch of his power, before which there is no ſtanding. Were it expedient, I could give in ſome ſpecial inſtances to witneſs this, and I hope there be not a few ſuch, who can date their firſt acquaintance with the truth of the goſpel, not only from a ſuffering time ſo univerſally upon the church, but a peculiar caſt thereof in their own perſonal caſe, and in ſuch a marvelous way, how Jeſus Chriſt did thus endear and commend himſelf to their ſoul.

11. That he hath graciouſly taken ſome ſervice off his peoples hand under much viſible weakneſs, and when they had but *a little ſtrength to keep by his word, and not to deny his name*, yea, to contend and wreſtle againſt ſo ſtrong a tide of oppoſition to the truth, is a gain to be reckoned upon, unexpreſſibly beyond all the loſs and ſufferings of the time, for thus hath a rent been payed in to the praiſe and glory of the church's Head, and more honourable teſtimony, which could not in that manner have been acceſſible in the greateſt outward calm of a proſperous ſtate.

12. How remarkably hath the Lord prevented the ſcandal of the croſs, as to many in this time, with that ſurpriſing outcome of encouragement and reſolution in ſome to adventure for the Lord, and embark with his ſuffering intereſts, where leaſt could have been expected: Yea, in ſuch where an eager purſuit and gripping after the world, would have been moſt feared from what was their natural diſpoſition, to commend that marvelous conquering power of grace, before which there is no poſſible ſtanding, that can make it then eaſy for men to part with their right-eye, or their right-hand. And hath it not been aſtoniſhing, how far many have been found above themſelves, or what in an ordinary way could have been looked for in their appearance for the truth, and confeſſion before men, when they were of the Lord called forth hereunto.

13. That in this ſtrange trial, which hath occaſioned ſuch great thoughts of heart hitherto, and whilſt the adverſaries ſtrength lay there, that they were the rod of God in his hand for his churches humbling, *yet hath he not ſtirred up all his anger, but hath ſtayed his rough wind in the day of his eaſt wind*, and hath ſtill been a *ſanctuary* and hiding place to his ſcattered people, how in ſuch a ſtrange circuit of providence he loſeth no time in bringing forth his work, but every new ſtep thereof with ſuch obſerveable advantage in the fitteſt ſeaſon; and by withdrawing viſible encouragements hath thus the more endeared his peoples mercies, by his own immediate appearance, and ſome ſurpriſing relief, *when he ſaw their power was gone, and that there was none ſhut up or left.*

14. Theſe remarkable providences, which have attended the godly, and ſo many ſuffering and deſolate families for the truth there, amidſt ſuch manifold

outward ſtraits and difficulties, as a witneſs, I muſt here give in for the Lord, and in behalf of his truth before this generation; and I doubt not ſhall be yet matter of a ſweet after-reckoning, how ſuch were carried through in a way ſo contrary to their thought and ſurpriſing, as hath cauſed them after, with greateſt aſtoniſhment reflect thereupon, and how *they thirſted not when he led them through the deſart*, &c. *Iſa.* xlviii. 21.

15. This alſo may be obvious, what an actual diſcovery this ſtrange perſecution from *Prelacy* hath made, for bringing forth to the light, as a preventing mercy to the church, ſuch, whoſe trading more cloſe under ground might have tended more to obſtruct the intereſt of the goſpel, than now when the cover is taken off, and how thus the Lord hath led them forth with the workers of iniquity.

16. I ſhall but add, which I am ſure that the adverſaries of the truth there muſt ſee and be enforced to confeſs, if they would give their own conſcience an hearing. How in both their counſels and actings, and all theſe eſſays they have had to bear down the *Church of* Scotland, *a divine hand hath viſibly appeared to withſtand them therein, and to an enſnaring them in the work of their own hand*; yea, have been thus often determined, but by an unſeen power over them, to fall on that way, than which nothing could have given their intereſt a greater daſh (and as though intentionally they had moved) for the church's good. O that ſuch would but ſo far open their eyes; yea, let the nations about conſider the work of God herein, what hath been the product of all the counſels, ſtatutes, acts and moſt vigorous eſſays in the execution thereof, to bear down the truth, and for wreathing the yoke of *Prelacy* on the *church* there, but to commend the *government* of Chriſt, according to his own inſtitution more univerſally to the *Nation*, to promote *Non-conformity*, with the furtheſt abhorrence (even by all ranks) of this *Prelatick* intereſt, ſo as it is demonſtrably evident, beſides theſe ſaving effects of the power of the goſpel, they are ſix fold more this day in number, to whom that way is made diſtaſtful and grievous, than was *ſixteen years* paſt. Thus hath the truth prevailed, and been found ſtronger than they who would oppoſe themſelves thereto. And for all that is come, are we not enforced to ſee, that the Lord hath not forſaken his church there, but her *gleanings*, (I doubt not to ſay,) are yet preferable to the *vintage* of many others. O that men would give glory to the Lord, and ceaſe to follow ſuch a war in contending with him, whom they have now taken to be their party: but if not, fall they muſt, and be broken by his hand, *who cutteth off the ſpirits of princes, and is terrible to the kings of the earth.*

CHAP. VIII.

WHILST we ſee in the bleſſed diſpoſal of the Lord that different lot he aſſignes to particular churches, as well as perſons, and that it is not then worſt, when ſuch exerciſing and ſharp trials do moſt abound, there ſeems ſome further cauſe of enquiry to preſs us at this day, upon the preſent ſtate of the Reformed churches, as it is moſt diſcernibly manifeſt, and what ſo viſible a hazard and ruin (which without ſome marvelous appearance of the Lord is like to fall under our hand in our age) doth now preſſingly call for as duty.

SECT. 1. For the firſt, this ſad view, (though not without ſome greateſt aſſurances from the word, to be ground of hope) anent the ſtate of the church, I ſhall in a few words offer, 1. That now is the time, when judgment ſeems to be begun at the houſe of God, and moſt remarkably marks at the green tree: when his church is now called to drink firſt of that cup of chaſtiſe-

chaſtiſement and trial, before the dregs he wrung out to the adverſary: a time beyond what our fathers have known, when the hand of the Lord is in a very immediate way heavy and ſore upon his people, and his diſpenſations many ways corrective and judicial, more than comforting.

2. That it cannot be hid, how unaſwerable our groaning, or any ſuitable weight of this ſeems to be to ſuch a ſtroke we are under, ſo that ſome ſharp fever may be looked for, to prevent ſo viſible a lethargy: whilſt moſt ſeem to be preſt more anent their perſonal eaſe and ſatisfaction under the rod, than to anſwer its deſign; to crouch under the burden more, than a being exerciſed anent the preſent duty of the time; Oh! may not this be a ſeen cauſe, why our own things preſs us ſo ſore, that the care of the church and kingdom of Chriſt, is this day become ſo light a burden?

3. We may now ſee ſuch a remarkable *Criſis* and ſtruggling in the preſent ſtate of the Reformed churches, as of a woman in travel, in extreme between life and death, when all things ſeem to have this voice, *be in pain, and labour to bring forth O daughter of Zion,* and if ſome great aſſurances from the word of truth were not to reſt on, Oh! what could be under our ſight, which is not matter of grief and fear?

4. And is it not obvious, how all grounds, which in an ordinary way, have been moſt hopeful and promiſing of the churches encouragement, have in a ſtrange manner been broke and diſappeared? And that gourd of the ſhadow and friendſhip of princes and great men ſo remarkably withered and gone, that we may know the churches intereſt and thriving, leans on no human prop, nor her hope at this day, *either by might, or by power, but by the ſpirit of the Lord:* But O here is enough for all, and I doubt not that in his bleſſed way, he ſhall yet ſerve himſelf of ſuch means for the great ſervice of this time, as that the leſs promiſing they are, the more convincing witneſs ſhall be thus of his being God, *who by things that are not, can confound the things that are, that no fleſh may glory in his preſence, but that he that glorieth, may glory in the Lord.*

5. Is there not at this day a moſt diſcernible ſound and cry of judgment to be near, if we knew in earneſt how to bring the written word and theſe times more near to other; for it muſt follow what, *Amos* ſhewed *chap.* iii. 8. *The Lord hath ſpoken, who can but propheſy.* Oh! if we were but ſuch a length to be under ſome dread and awe of theſe abounding ſpiritual plagues in this time, and what follows thereupon, *Iſaiah* vi. 11. *Until the cities be without inhabitant, and the houſes without man, and the land utterly deſolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and a great forſaking be of the land, but yet in it ſhall be a tenth, &c.* which ſad heavy words I muſt ſay, had not a more affrighting aſpect upon that people then waſted under ſpiritual judgments, than they ſeem to have on the viſible church of Chriſt at this day: though a bleſſed recovery, (how ſharp ſoever the cure may be) we muſt not bring under debate.

6. That at this day there is ſuch abounding *atheiſm* as lies in the boſom of a profeſt aſſent to the truth, as too viſible for bringing it under debate, and one of the ſaddeſt plagues, which hath almoſt overgone the Reformed church; yea, which is the more dreadful, as it ſeems no leſs to be kept hid by moſt from themſelves, than it is from others: but Oh! muſt we not give this ſuch a name as *Atheiſm*, where theſe evidences hereof are ſo clear. 1. How eaſily many more ſatisfied anent the great concerns of Religion, to take them upon report, without any further enquiry, than they would be in the moſt common intereſt of their life. 2. How men are thus heſitant and unſure about an after and eternal ſtate, whilſt they know no poſſible way, from being ſecured from

this fear, which is of all undeniably the greateſt, that an eternity of woe may be before them. I confeſs, ſome way it is not ſtrange, if any queſtion, if there be ſuch a thing as the power and truth of religion, and theſe marvelous experiences the ſaints have hereof, becauſe ſo few know what this means, for if the generality of the world were blind, and knew not what a thing ſeeing is, it might probably cauſe them doubt if there were any ſuch thing as light and colours, that others did ſee, or if there were in truth ſuch a thing as ſight is; but Oh! how amazing is it, when the great things of God do with ſuch ſeriouſneſs offer themſelves to trial, and calls us with the furtheſt certainty of ſeeing, and not by report to know the ſame. How moſt yet live wholly ſtrangers thereto? 3. And is not rare ſuch an exerciſe this day, as any ſerious reflection on thoſe truths, and import thereof, to which men find ſo eaſy to give an aſſent, or to bring this once near their thoughts, that as religion and the power thereof cannot poſſibly be known but by experience, there is ſuch a demonſtration of it to be aſſuredly had, as that of a living man, whereby he knows that he lives and breaths. Oh! at what rate do now moſt profeſſed chriſtians enjoy their peace and quiet, when the acceptable hour and ſeaſon of making ſure for another world is haſtening ſo faſt, without being once concerned to have ſerious godlineſs a perſonal buſineſs, and to know it on ſome aſſurance on their ſoul, who yet knows that to die, and paſs that great ſtep out of time into eternity, muſt e'er long be their perſonal work, though men can but once die without all poſſible reacting of it again for ever. 4. Though there ſeemed never more cauſe for ſuch a ſad remark than now, which was in former times in the church, that either the ſcripture muſt not be the word of God, or moſt then were not chriſtians, who profeſs'd themſelves ſuch: yet how few can be ſeen, to be ſuch a length in this day, as to bring themſelves and their way into the ſcripture, and before its judgment: But Oh! in a deplorable and deſperate kind of peace, do keep at a diſtance with ſuch clear and enforcing diſcoveries of the truth, who do not profeſſedly oppoſe the ſame.

7. It may by too manifeſt this day, how much it is become a matter of wit and invention to be chriſtians, rather than of power and life, and to act handſomely ſuch a part, as it were by rules of art, than a ſerious following of the truth in the ſimplicity thereof. This being now a time, when the *Theory* and *Notion* of practical divinity hath been too much enlarged, and this in ſo different a mould and ſhape, as hath too viſibly tended for its darkning, and to render it more perplex and thorny, whence. 1. It may be ſeen, how ſuch a length in the notion and form of knowledge as ſwims moſt in the judgment hath almoſt taken up the room in the applicatory part thereof, to have light brought near to the ſoul by a perſonal application, as though the great intereſt of religion were not more to live the truths thereof, than to know them. Oh! how ſad a ſnare is like to be for helping many to *periſh* with the more quiet and ſecurity, the more they are inured in ſuch an ordinary converſe with the *Theory* of godlineſs. 2. And may we not thus ſee a feeding and living on the known and greateſt truths, which have a communication with the very vitals of religion, ſuch as the doctrine of redemption, adoption, juſtification, and effectual calling, *&c.* is ſo rarely known this day in the church. 3. How little alſo is this work of a chriſtian followed about their affections, ſo as to be kept vigorous and warm in the matter of duty which ſo much influenceth that dead and uncomfortable walk, and driving heavily in the ways of the Lord by a great part who are profeſſors in this time.

8. I ſhall but further add upon ſo ſad a ſubject, how viſibly almoſt every where is that great intereſt of the life and power of religion through moſt of the

the Reformed churches ſpent and worn out, with that ancient love and tenderneſs in following the Lord, which was once in the firſt times of the Reformation diſcernible, which ſeems now to have no proportion to that meaſure of light and knowledge we are under. Oh! whether is this gone even in thoſe parts, where ſometimes the word of the goſpel did with ſuch burning and ſhining light go forth, ſo as the very ſight and remembrance of ſuch times is like to wear out.

CHAP. IX.

HAving given this ſhort touch of ſome ſad appearances of this time, and what ſeems moſt diſcernible in the preſent ſtate of the church, when (if ever in any age) that *call* to the church of *Epheſus*, does now ſpeak with greateſt weight to the Reformed Churches, *to remember from whence they are fallen, and do their firſt works; leſt the Lord come, and remove the candleſtick.* And ſo ſad a declining from the ancient power and life of religion, which once was, may have the *form* alſo taken away. And ſince this is a matter not only of a publick concern for the life and being of the church; but what ſhould lie ſo near to every one, with reſpect to their eternal ſtate: yea, that its undeniable, where the preſent hazard and ruin of the churches is now moſt diſcernible, there muſt a healing and recovery alſo be ſought. I ſhall but in a few *particulars* ſpeak to ſomething of preſent and preſſing *duty*, which through the Lords gracious concurrence, ſhould be of ſingular uſe, to promote this great intereſt of the *power of Religion.*

SECT. 5. That this day, chriſtians work in the duties and exerciſes of godlineſs, and the doctrine of the church thereanent, did lead more in, with ſome ſerious tendency to the *Goſpel, and to Jeſus Chriſt* there, as the alone *Center*, whither the whole of truth and godlineſs muſt meet. Oh! how ſad and aſtoniſhing is this? And I muſt ſay one of the moſt influencing viſible cauſes of ſuch an ebb and conſumption, as is now ſo univerſal in the vital parts of chriſtianity, that this great ſtudy of practical religion, which is not conceivable, but as it is *evangelick*, does not more cloſely keep betwixt theſe; a moving unto Jeſus Chriſt our bleſſed head, as the laſt end, and alone pattern, to which it muſt be conformed, and its being derived from him, and its alone fountain: Yea when ſo great a trade is about religion in the church, yet how little thoſe ſeem to be known or lie near in the practice of moſt. 1. That the chriſtians ſtock is not in his own hand: but all the disburſements and out-giving to each of theſe muſt come through his moſt bleſſed hand, *in whom it pleaſed the Father that all fulneſs ſhould dwell, and from whom we muſt receive grace for grace.* Oh! ſhould it be ſtrange, though theſe gracious influences of light and life, are ſo much withheld in theſe times, as to that meaſure which hath been formerly known thereof, when ſo many are upon another ſcent, than this bleſſed and ſtraight way of the goſpel in rolling the ſtreſs of their work and duties upon Jeſus Chriſt by a continued trade, and uſe making of him as our *ſanctification*, and to improve his kingly power for that end. 2. That it is not more preſſing upon us to have that bleſſed ſacrifice of *Chriſt our paſſover* once offered for ſin, to be continued as a *ſtrengthning feaſt*, to live and feed upon, 1 *Cor.* v. 8. As we are there called *to keep the feaſt*, and thus know, what it is to have the *blood of atonement* by a clear warming and ſenſible application thereof, laid as the alone healing ſalve, to a wounded ſpirit. 3. To have the whole of a chriſtians trials and exerciſes thus airthed and brought to the goſpel, as the ſure and alone way of their ſtrength, that ſhould let them know in another manner their joy break up, when

when under *neceſſity, diſtreſs, reproach, and felt weakneſs* in our ſelves, that the *power of Chriſt might reſt upon them*, 2 Cor. xii. 4. To know more by practical light, not only theſe ineſtimable fruits and bleſſings of Redemption by Chriſt; but what it is to have our love and delight carried forth towards his *glorious perſon*, and for embracing thus of himſelf, as altogether lovely. O this is the alone object, which beyond holineſs, and all the promiſed advantages of his death and purchaſe, we ſhould move moſt towards, to know an *union* with his *perſon*, and taking up our alone reſt there in himſelf, where the chriſtian's choice and conſent, with the furtheſt complacence and delight, in ſo ineſtimably great an offer, ſhould terminate in him, as their exceeding joy. O bleſſed, and unexpreſſibly ſweet truth, (were this more known by practical light in the power and efficacy thereof) that the chriſtian's claim and intereſt to the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and all the bleſſings of the goſpel does thus follow a marriage union and propriety in his *perſon*, and our being *betroathed* indiſſolubly, in that neareſt tie, and by an irrevocable conſent unto Jeſus Chriſt, as he ſtands to us in all his offices, and upon his own terms, what might be then hoped of another luſtre and appearance upon profeſſors of the truth in this age; and that ſome ſhould not find it ſo eaſy to offer a thruſt in ſuch a manner to darken the doctrine of grace, and give the world ſuch a ſcheme and mould of the goſpel, as they do at this day. And it is ſure, a more ſerious looking in upon this great myſtery, ſhould enforce ſome conviction with it, that its another thing to be a chriſtian, than many profeſſors now take it to be: I have known ſome who had been a remarkable length beyond others in following of duties, and in light there anent; yea, to the conviction of all that knew them, were in this judged true ſerious in their way; who after by the gracious work of the Lord, were made to ſee the truth of *converſion* to be another thing, which they had been wholly ſtrangers to, even when ſuch a length in chriſtian duties, until once this marvelous light by the goſpel ſhined in upon them, and therewith knew what it was to have their heart pulled in to Jeſus Chriſt, by ſuch a bleſſed drawing touch of his power, as did determine their cloſing with him in his way, and upon his own terms.

Sect. 2. It ſeems a preſſing *call* to many in theſe times, who own a profeſſion of the truth, with ſuch a doubtful and fluctuating aſſent thereto, what we may ſee, *Rev.* iii. 15. that they would be in earneſt, and exerciſe reaſon there anent, as to know their ſtate, and how it is with them upon theſe great concerns of an immortal ſoul; ſo as either to quite an empty ſhew of godlineſs, or follow this in the *power and truth* thereof, ſince it is not conceiveable upon cleareſt grounds, what poſſible heſitation ſhould be betwixt theſe, *that if the Lord be God*, and the ſcripture revealed in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, his undoubted word and counſel, by which the alone way of being eternally ſaved, is revealed unto men: It is then ſure, that this muſt be their greateſt intereſt to follow him, and own his truth with all *their heart, and with all their ſtrength*; but if not; and that they are not perſwaded upon their ſoul hereof; there muſt needs be a being poſitive, and determined here, without the furtheſt contradiction to reaſon. Now for enforcing ſome conviction hereof, if through the bleſſing of the Lord this might have weight on the conſcience of any, I ſhall offer theſe to be conſidered. 1. That it is a thing ſo unanſwerable, why men be not either ſeriouſly godly, or real *Atheiſts*, either to quite duty, or what herein *their hand findeth, to do it with all their might*, ſince it is upon no leſs than an eternal intereſt, and the ſeaſon now ſo quickly haſteneth away for any poſſible acceſs to ſuch a trial. 2. What if upon the very ſuppoſal and report hereof, that this account given

by the whole race of the ſaints ſince the beginning, of theſe marvelous things of religion, in the power and reality thereof, be aſſuredly true: and this bleſſed way, which they ſee others to be ſerious in, be the alone way to a bleſſedneſs for ever, then in what a dreadful caſe are they, or can they think to meet with ſuch, and enjoy one ſtate together in another world, whoſe way and principles have been in ſuch a real oppoſition to others ſtated here. Oh! what an aſtoniſhing peace is this, and which moſt at this day entertain, and when it is under ſome ſhew and profeſſion to be chriſtians? 3. How is it poſſible, to ſhut their eyes at theſe enforcing evidences of the power and life of religion, to be an undoubted certainty, and known unto others by experience, tho' they were never acquainted therewith themſelves: when it is ſure they muſt ſee in the life and practice of ſuch ſome viſible tranſcript of what is alſo ſo expreſly witneſſed in the ſcripture thereof, nor can they debate ſuch to be highly rational, as much as any in other things; yea, to juſtify them in their conſcience of being ſerious in what they own? and muſt it not be ſome other ſight theſe have hereanent, than they yet have ever underſtood? 4. It ſeems a ſtrange contradiction to reaſon, if they would but once reflect upon this, what ground of prejudice and caſting of reproach on that way is there, which they never yet knew upon trial, whilſt they ſee this doth not flie the light, or their exacteſt ſearch and enquiry; but that the cauſe moſt viſibly is an imbred enmity and averſion at the power and truth of godlineſs, for which they yet know not how to give a reaſon. 5. How they come ſuch a length in the form and external duties of godlineſs, when they ſuffer ſo much hereby, as a ſad and bitter yoke to the fleſh, and know no ſolid gain and income this way; whilſt duty in the power and ſpiritual exerciſe thereof is ſo ſweet and eaſy, yea, ſuch unexpreſſible delights found, when it is ſeriouſly followed. Oh! what a ſore part is religion in the practice, if it be not on mens heart? Or what comfort is there to come ſo near in a being almoſt chriſtians, and yet periſh in the cloſe? to hazard ſome little, but with ſuch a reſerve, as yet to adventure all for Jeſus Chriſt, if they ſhould be called thereto, and upon each hand be ſo ſad loſers? 6. To admit the truth and authority of the ſcripture with ſo viſible a latitude, as is by many this day owned in their way, may ſeem indeed ſtrange, and what a lax conception and mould of religion theſe frame to themſelves, as tends to lay aſide that fear, tenderneſs, and ſerious work in the things of God, which the word ſo preſſingly enforceth, as if mens real intereſt thus, were how to *periſh* without fear and dread. 7. It is a ſtrange length moſt in theſe times come, in a concurrence with others in the publick duties of religion, when they know ſo little any preſſure upon their ſpirit, what ſhould be their work alone, in the retired duties of a chriſtian, which are unqueſtionably the moſt ſubſtantial and weighty part of my duty, and can religion be there in truth, (whatever name theſe have to live) where its more ſecret work under ground keeps no proportion to that which is publick in the view of others. 8. That now when there is ſo much diſcernibly to imbitter the world to them, and their outward comforts do ſo rarely anſwer to the ſore labour, toil and griefs which are here. Oh! how is it, ſo few are found on this bleſſed ſcent and enquiry, to know the power and truth of godlineſs, and what a ſure and unexpreſſible relief is there for every ſtate and condition; in delighting their ſoul in God, and a near and feeling converſe with the great truths of the goſpel, which are to moſt, known but by report only: ſo as they might once know upon trial what thus it is to have the deſires of their hearts anſwered.

Sect. 3. Since this is of greateſt weight, and that it is ſure, the alone frame and mould of practical religion is with ſuch expreſs plainneſs ſhewed us

in the ſcripture, as none needs be in the dark, without ſhutting their eyes; yea, I muſt ſay, if theſe *ſigns* and *characters* given of the reality of godlineſs were ſeriouſly pondered, there was never an age, wherein more profeſſors are like to come ſhort of heaven, and be found in a dreadful deluſion anent their ſtate than now; and ſo much the more affrighting, as ſo little acceſs ſeems this day for many's being convinced, through that length they have come in a form; the truth whereof is ſo great a myſtery: Nor ever was a time of ſuch light, when the thoughts of theſe great truths of *heaven* and *hell*, and for being eternally ſaved, ſeem'd to have had ſo little weight on mens ſoul. Oh! that ſerious work and exerciſe, which was ſo known in former times of the church, *for working out their ſalvation with fear and trembling*, ſeems almoſt gone in a throng of other things. It is true, there are remarkably different *ſizes* and degrees among the ſaints, and the infancy of ſome, as well as the further age of others muſt be conſidered: But ſince it is like a peculiar ſtroke upon moſt, that they will not once come near to the light, and be tried by that infallible rule; I judge it duty, *whether they will hear or forbear*, to offer *ſome ſcripture truths that lies ſo near to the very ſtate and being of a chriſtian*; that if ever I knew any thing of the way of the Lord, I muſt profeſs I know not, how any can be ſtrangers thereto, and to ſome near and feeling converſe therewith in experience, without being ſtrangers to the very *eſſentials* of chriſtianity, or can have any comfortable evidence, that they ſhall live that life of glory, who have not thus known by practical light, what it is to live the life of grace here.

1. That ſuch as have paſſed the new birth, muſt know a ſpiritual and new life, with which they were not born, and is from no natural cauſes, but formed and wrought within by the ſpirit, whereof there is as certain and undeniable a demonſtration, as they are ſure that they breath, and have a natural life, a life that hath its peculiar operation and vital acts put forth in its breathings, delights and deſires, in a near converſe with the Lord, as truly as any acts of this natural life; with theſe ſenſible languiſhings and over-cloudings thereof, as well as enjoyments and pleaſures, proper to its own nature, as the influences and breathings of the ſpirit of the Lord are let forth, or reſtrained. It is ſure, nothing can be more expreſly ſhewed, than this from the whole of the ſcripture, and how it follows on an union with *Jeſus Chriſt*, *in whom it is hid*, Col. iii. 3. *and a living in him*, Gal. ii. 20. *to dwell in him*, Eph. iii. 17. *to be quickned in him*, Eph. ii. 5. *yea to be nouriſhed and increaſed in him*, *Col.* ii. 19. and is not this a ſerious buſineſs for trial, what is the ſeal to the truth thereof from experience?

2. That a ſpiritual evidence and diſcovery of divine truth, which differs not in degree, but in kind, is now known to them, as is clear, 1 *Cor.* ii. 14. whence the truth, of the word are ſometimes ſet home on the ſoul with that light and power, which is unexpreſſible to others; and though it be a knowing the ſame truths, yet in another manner than before; when by the *Spirit they know the things that are freely given us of God*, which no report could ever have made them believe, until by grace they were taken out of that dreadful gulf of the darkneſs of nature, unto that marvelous light revealed in the goſpel, which then cauſed ſuch a change betwixt them and what they once were.

3. That *the peace of God*, *which paſſeth natural underſtanding*, *and preſerves the heart and mind through Chriſt Jeſus*, is not to be kept without a continued war and wreſtling, and that as they have two parties within, ſtated in moſt vigorous oppoſition to other; ſo the more ſpiritual duty is, and the more cloſly the law is preſſed in its ſpiritual extent, the further averſion hath the car-

nal

nal heart thereto, which is not more clearly ſhewed, *Rom.* vii. 22. 23. than their experience can witneſs.

4. That this truth of the kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt is to be known on the ſoul, as well as his viſible kingdom over the church; which conſiſteth *in righteouſneſs, peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, *Rom.* xiv. 17. but ſuch as cannot poſſibly be known or underſtood, but by a practical and feeling light thereof: *And in his working all our works in us:* whence ſuch ſenſible liberty at one time more than another, and confidence in our approach to God after ſaddeſt bondage and fear, ſo ſweet a calm and ſun-ſhine, when the ſtorm is moſt ſharp without, and a being carried through theſe difficulties with ſuch advantage, which at another time and in another frame, they would have fainted at.

5. That a new acquaintance and ſome other ſociety, than that of men; and a real fellowſhip and converſe with God both in ſecret and more publick duties is aſſuredly true; ſo as they have been never leſs alone, with more ſolid refreſhment, than thus alone, in the retirements of a chriſtian now: as the whole of the ſcripture bears ſuch a witneſs hereto, as there needs no clearing thereof. O what a teſtimony have the ſaints alſo to give? and where this is taken upon report, can it be, that religion hath ever been a matter of power and reality to ſuch? I thought it a choice word from a grave and exerciſed chriſtian in the ways of God, that being frequently and much alone in the exerciſe of prayer, to ſome that thought ſtrange thereat, ſaid, *he could not part with his duty, until he found the Lord, and when he found him, it was ſo ſweet, as made it not eaſy to go forth to the world.* Yea, that alſo of another famous chriſtian of our nation, who had ſo oft known an immediate ſtrength and ſupport under greateſt preſſures ſealed in this way of retired fellowſhip with God; *with him the moſt of moſts is leſs than nothing, but without him I find the leaſt of leaſts to be more than my burden.*

6. It is ſurely conjoined with the being and ſtate of a chriſtian, to know in experience, a power with the word and ordinances of the goſpel, above the moſt perſuaſive words of man, or any moral influence; yea, with that different manifeſtation, both as to light and power at one time, as they can no more have at their choice at other times, than to have the ſun-ſhine upon the earth, when under a dark cloud: and thus muſt know ſomething of that *Luke* xxiv. *the burning of their heart within when the Scripture hath been opened, that the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power*, 1 *Cor.* iv. 20. *yea what an evidence and demonſtration of the ſpirit is with the goſpel*, 1 *Cor.* ii. 6.

7. That ſuch great things are undoubted realities, as the ſeal and earneſt of the Spirit of promiſe; the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, *Epheſ.* i. 13. which in ſome meaſure muſt be known here to each of the ſaints; the ſenſible intimation of pardon on their ſoul, after contrition and brokenneſs of heart; that voice of joy and gladneſs, than which, no audible voice was ever more certainly known, than this hath been on their ſoul; the immediate preſence of the comforter, and truths brought in ſo ſeaſonably in a day and hour of ſtrait, as hath unexpreſſible eaſe and refreſhment therewith.

8. It is ſure, this truth alſo lies ſo near the ſtate and being of a chriſtian, as there muſt be ſome practical knowledge of it, who ever knew the work of God on their own ſoul, that there is acceſs and liberty of pouring out the heart in prayer, and a being determined to approach unto the Lord with a ſenſible power from himſelf; the felt taſte of this acceptation of them in their ſuit, and being admitted to ſee his face with joy; yea, is thus made as diſcernible as it is enſured, *Phil.* iv. 5. *Pſ.* xci. 15. as on the other hand; upon

ſome wearing out and reſtraint in this bleſſed exerciſe, the ſenſible abatement of that ſpiritual life, and vigour they formerly knew in the ways of God; ſo as to find theſe duties both burdenſome and diſreliſhing, in which they formerly have known ſuch delight, and how that truth, *Matth.* xxvi. 41. doth then enforce a witneſs thereto, that *watching* and *prayer* is the tried means to keep any from falling into temptation.

9. That as there are unexpreſſible delights in holineſs, yea, ſuch a reality as *the joy and peace in believing*, which they certainly know; ſo alſo a diſcernible quenching of the ſpirit by adventuring on any known ſin; and when they would not read their boſom diſtempers from the word, they have been enforced oft to look in again upon them by ſome ſharp and viſible check from the Lord, and know the truth of that 1 *Theſ.* v. 19. *Pſ.* lxxxi. 11, 12.

10. That ſenſible influences of ſtrength from the Lord, and his gracious concurrence, which waits on commanded duty aſſuredly are, not only as to the frame of their ſpirits, but as to the exerciſe of their gifts, and how without him who is our ſtrength we can do nothing; I ſhould think it a ſtrange thing how a chriſtian can be in earneſt with his work, and a ſtranger to this.

11. Laſtly, That it is ſure, the *fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace*, and how at no time doth tenderneſs and ſtraightneſs in mens walk want ſome inward taſte and ſeal of its acceptation with the Lord: When it is no leſs diſcernible, ſuch a withdrawing thereof upon ſome wrong ſtep and turning aſide in his way, as diſcouragement and darkneſs doth ſenſibly meet then, to let them know that it is ſurely *a bitter and evil thing to depart from the Lord.*

Sect. 4. This duty in theſe ſad and winnowing times we are fallen in, ſhould lie near us, with reſpect to the publick intereſt of the church, as well as to our own perſonal caſe, to guard againſt prejudices at the way of the Lord, which on theſe grounds I would preſs. 1. That ſuch a remarkable *woe*, is denounced in the ſcripture, not only againſt thoſe by *whom offences come*, but *to the world becauſe of offences*, this being one of the ſaddeſt ſtrokes from the Lord, when a diſpoſition and tendency to ſtumble, hath judicially a ſtumbling-block laid in their way. 2. As under that predominant humour of the jaundice, the colour is ſuitably repreſented to the eye; it is ſtrange to think what a judgment an evil eye doth paſs on the ſpotleſs ways of the Lord, yea, with that ſatisfaction an impoiſoned nature doth ſeek to ſtrengthen it ſelf. 3. It is ſure, the truth ſuffers not more from open oppoſition, than oft it does by theſe hid reflections, and ſubtil conveyances of reproach from many in theſe times. 4. It hath not been known ſince that bleſſed Reformation of the church from Popery, that where in any of the churches the Lord hath had ſome ſpecial work on foot, and the intereſt of the goſpel gaining ground, but Satan there hath followed the ſame remarkably with ſome ſuch cloſe and ſubtil aſſault, in bringing forth ſomething of his work in reſemblance thereto, to beget prejudice againſt the way of truth. It was unqueſtionably one of the moſt ſearching trials the *German church* had, by that ſtrange appearance of the *Anabaptiſts* there. But this being ſo notour and publick in the hiſtories of theſe late times, beſides other remarkable inſtances of the like kind, I forbear to mention it further. One memorable paſſage, that is leſs known to many, may be for ſome advantage and confirming to the truth, the inſerting of it here. When the goſpel was flouriſhing in the church of *Ireland* by the miniſtry of ſome eminent ſervants of Chriſt, who were labouring there ſome years before the rebellion, and a moſt extraordinary time of the power of the ſpirit following the ordinances; when others of Satan's devices to caſt a let in the way, had proved abortive, this great deſtroyer was

at

at laſt let looſe in a ſtrange manner, to eſſay a counterfeit of the work of the Lord there, which was then ſo effectual to the converſion of many. This firſt began about *Lochlearn* upon ſeveral ignorant perſons, who in the midſt of the publick worſhip fell a breathing and panting, as theſe who had run long, with ſtrange pangs like convulſions; yea, thus were affected, whatever purpoſe was preached, even by ſuch miniſters who were known enemies to the truth, the number of which ſtill increaſed through ſeveral pariſhes for a time. At firſt, both miniſters and chriſtians there were put to a ſtand, but after upon further diſcovery of the tendency of their way, and found no ſolid convincing work, which had therewith any ſenſe of ſin, or panting after a Saviour, did quickly perceive this to be one of the depths of Satan, and his deſign to ſlander and diſgrace the work of the Lord, ſo as after ſome grave miniſters, who were then there, when they began in that manner to appear in publick, did with great authority rebuke that lying ſpirit in their Maſter's name; yea, it was evident how after ſuch did continue rude, prophane and ignorant. Through this engine did the Devil thus drive to beget prejudices amongſt thoſe, who did but look on at a diſtance; againſt the power and life of religion.

Sect. 5. What a bleſſed and effectual means ſhould this be, to promote ſeriouſneſs, and againſt ſuch ſad and ſpreading formality of theſe times, the churches are ſo much now waſted under; *to have more deep and frequent thoughts on that great ſubject of death*, about which there is no debate amongſt us, yet it is ſtrange to conſider in what a manner it's kept at a diſtance with moſt of the generation. O what an enforcement ſhould this bring with it, to follow godlineſs, not in a form, but in the power and truth thereof, if ſuch who have profited ſo little under the ordinances of the goſpel, would but ſit ſometimes alone, and hear this *grave preacher* ſpeak to them, and bring theſe things near to their thoughts. 1. That ſtrangeway, and paſſage they are aſſuredly to go through, which was never known to them before, but muſt once paſs it, betwixt time and eternity, and what this will be, when they are entering on that dark and unknown ground; *whilſt the keepers of the houſe ſhall tremble, and theſe that look out at the window are darkned, becauſe man goeth to his long home.* This is a grave and ſerious work, if men could find ſuch time, amidſt the throng of other things, to adviſe how they adventure, and on what terms into another world. 2. How near this great change is, without a poſſibility to have one hour enſured beyond the preſent hour of our life, ſo as each night we lie down, not knowing but our breath may be ſtopt with ſome ſudden arreſt of death before the morning, which might put us oft to think, without a ſtrange and deſperate ſecurity; *how would death now meet us at this hour?* I thought it a great word of a choice and ſerious chriſtian a few years a go, when he was called to ſuffer for the truth, and was ſentenced to die; ſaid before his judges, *I bleſs the Lord, that theſe ſeven years paſt, death could not have come wrong to me, not one day.* 3. What ſerious thoughts ſhould this cauſe, in one moment to admit ſo great a change, and in the very inſtant of the ſouls parting with the body, a preſent entering into that after ſtate, which ſhall put the chriſtian once and for ever, yea, in one moment, in the fulneſs of unconceiveable joy, in the immediate embracements of Jeſus Chriſt, the ſociety of the bleſſed angels, and church triumphant, and what a ſight ſhall that be, which no thoughts or words can poſſibly reach, when with the ſhutting of theſe eyes here, they are then opened in the paradiſe of God, and know the ſtate which is there, *and what is the inheritance of the ſaints in light.* 4. What a change this muſt be to ſuch, who in one moment ſhall part with their heaven,

and find a real hell; *for the men of this world, whose portion is here,* to be pulled from all the delights and pleasures they had once had, to take up their lodging in these dark and horrid prisons, which are in the pit, and then know this to be sad earnest, of which they made so small account, while they were upon earth. Oh! will nothing bring near the doctrine of hell, and eternal damnation to most of this generation, until they know it upon trial, when these gates shall be everlastingly shut never to admit an opening. 5. To consider what thoughts and reflection must men in eternity have of their former state and condition. And what will the remembrance of a life time here in the fulness of outward comforts amount to, which are gone, never to return more. Yea in that hour, when the great men of this earth are turned out of all their possessions, and their soul taken from them, by that dreadful pull of grim death, not by a rendering and commitment thereof to Jesus Christ, which his people only know; *then whose shall all these possessions be?* O! but that must be an heavy and sore pull for an unmortified man to die and leave the world, whilst his heart is still alive to it. 6. What an other account, upon the approach of this blessed change will the christians then have of their most imbittering crosses, which through grace have been tended both to trial and furthering of their faith and love; and some solid fruit for the Lord, beyond these, who once had the greatest delights and pleasures here, when they are past and gone? 7. Is it not near, when many shall question whether their life was real or a dream; whilst each day and hour as it is hastening over some part of the worlds comforts, putteth by also some of the christian's crosses and griefs; that whilst his work lies most to make some gainful improvement thereof; he knows also now, *this sad and searching trouble, and I, shall never meet again:* though the fruit thereof goes before, and shall meet him in that blessed state which is above. 8. To consider also that sweet and sound sleep the bodies of the saints shall have for a time in the grave, which is the bed of their rest; yea, how indissolubly there, is their dust still united with their blessed Head, and within a little, how ravishing shall their wakening be. It was a sweet thought to that excellent servant of Christ, Mr. *Rollock*, when he stretched forth his hand on his death-bed, with a serious looking thereon, and said: *Yea, even this hand shall once shine in glory.* It is sure, the earth now could not be capable of the least of the saints, who are entered into a glorified state, so unconceiveably great is that distance betwixt that condition where now they are, and the highest state of a christian here in this lower world.

Sect. 6. This weighty duty I must touch a little here, to watch and guard against that dreadful hazard and wasting plague, which hath had so visible a tendency, almost to ruin the interest of the churches of Christ this day, of *love and eager pursuit after the world.* It is remarkable with what further light this is enforced under the *New Testament*, than under the *Old*, both as to the hazard, which followeth thereon, and that reckoning the saints must make with the *strait and narrow way, and much tribulation to enter into glory.* Present things lie near the senses, and have oft that force, as most will not cease to follow the bait, even when that destroying hook of the hazard of losing their immortal soul is so discernible, yea, how loath many in this age are to come near to scripture light hereanent: But oh it is undeniable how much this hath tended to a wearing out the power and spirituality of religion with that life and tenderness that did formerly appear in the church, when to quit all for Jesus Christ, and his truth was with such joy and delight then reckoned upon in these times of persecution; yea, their serious and earnest

purſuing after the ſubſtance, and reality of godlineſs was no leſs diſcernible, than now this eager tendency and graſping after that ſhadow of the world by moſt, who profeſs the truth. But though the publick concerns of the kingdom of Chriſt ſhould not have weight with ſome: Yea, if men ceaſe not to exerciſe reaſon, and be under any awe and dread of the ſcripture, yea, have not concluded their hope in this life only; this *ſubject*, I am ſure, may enforce ſome ſerious thoughts to them. I confeſs I muſt ſay, upon any light from the ſcripture, with the too manifeſt diſcovery of any of that eager ſcent moſt ſeem to be upon in this age, how to be rich, and have great things in the world, it hath put me to a ſtand; not but it is an unqueſtionable duty for chriſtians in their ſeveral callings to be ſeriouſly concerned therein, *and not ſlothful in buſineſs*, and that ſuch are, and have been in all times, who have got their ſpirits more dead and ſubdued to the world amidſt the greateſt enjoyments thereof, than many of a low and mean eſtate; yea, that there are, I hope, not a few whoſe intereſts here tend to ſome further ſervice for the Lord, in conſecrating the gain thereof to him: but this is an attainment indiſſolubly linked, not with the truth and reality of grace only, but much of the power and vigorous exerciſe thereof, and needs more than ordinary watching with prayer againſt that hazard they are in: But upon the other hand, it ſeems ſtrange, that ſcripture truths ſo plain, pungent and weighty, (if men do truly believe, and credit the teſtimony of God therein,) ſhould not cauſe more fears and tremblings of heart on moſt of the generation, yea on many, who I hope, want not ſome ſerious reſpect to the better part, when theſe are brought near and ſeriouſly pondered. 1. That it is ſo expreſly told us by the Lord, *Matth.* xix. 23, 24. *Verily, I ſay unto you, that a rich man ſhall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven*; *and again, I ſay unto you, that it is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* And the very ſame ſet down by the *Evangeliſt*, *Luke* xviii. 24, 25. And though our bleſſed Maſter expounds his own words there, and that theſe are not inconſiſtent; even for ſuch as are rich to be ſaved, ſince *nothing is impoſſible to God*, yet does it moſt clearly ſhew theſe rare and great inſtances of an infinite power; yea, that the world and a large ſhare thereof is ſuch a let in the way, as we may ſee it ſomething extraordinary, with ſuch a load of the earth for any to get through the ſtrait and narrow gate, which is indeed as the *needle eye*, without ſubduedneſs and mortification. 2. We ſee a dreadful woe denounced againſt ſuch, *Luke* vi. 24. *Woe to you that are rich, for you have received your conſolation*; and how theſe torments of the rich man ſhewed, *Luke* xvi. 19. are conjoined by Chriſt himſelf there, though in a parable, with an having *received his good things here in this life*; and though he graciouſly allowes his people the comfortable uſe, and enjoying of their outward lot, though the convoy of theſe true and greateſt comforts, which are ſpiritual, is oft in the way of the croſs, yet is that ſad mark by the Holy Ghoſt put on others, *Jam.* v. 5. *They have lived in pleaſures, and nouriſhed themſelves as in a day of ſlaughter.* That it ſeems matter of aſtoniſhment how men live under any awful regard of the ſcripture, if a large intereſt in the earth be not ſome cauſe of fear and dread. 3. And is not mens eager love and deſires after the world, a ſcripture ſign and mark of a reprobate ſtate? *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*, 1 *Joh.* ii. 15. And that ſad note put on the covetous man, *Pſ.* x. 3. *That he is the man whom the Lord hateth*; yet oh how rare a ſight is riches this day, and without love, immoderate deſires, and a ſetting of the heart thereon? 4. That ſuch eager deſires, when men *will be rich* is ſo ex-

preſly

preſly ſhewed in the ſcripture, to be the very ſcent and path that leads down to death, *and a being drowned in eternal perdition*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 9. and the cauſe thereof held forth, that native tendency this hath to *a falling into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts*. And is not *the carnal mind enmity to God*, yea every length and advantage this gains, ſo much further does men ſtand in a direct contrariety and oppoſition to God. 5. Though ſuch do bleſs themſelves in their heart, and are looked on with envy by others; what a dreadful mark doth the Holy Ghoſt put on theſe; with a call unto all to conſider the ſame. *Whoſe eyes ſtand out with fatneſs, and have more than heart can wiſh, and are not in trouble as others. Lo theſe are the ungodly that proſper in the world*, *Pſ.* lxxiii. 11, 12. yea, are thus ſet a part with that ſad deſignation, *that they are men of this world, whoſe portion is in this life, they are full of ſubſtance*, &c. *Pſ.* xvii. 14. oh is it not cauſe of fear, that where the world hath got mens hearts it is a ſad evidence, they have got it for their *portion?* 6. Where riches are given, is it not upon *trial*, yea one of the greateſt; which men can have to keep them under ſome weight and exerciſe, more than the moſt ſearching croſs; ſince it is clear, the more intereſt any thus have, it adds ſo much to their *talent*, which is not theirs, but committed under truſt, of which every one muſt be accountable according to their meaſure, *Matth.* xxv. 15. *Luk.* xix. 15. and will e'er long hear that awful call, *Come, give an account of your ſtewarſhip*, Luke xvi. 2. which will be found another thing, as to a faithful improvement of that meaſure, than ſeems by moſt to be either believed or laid to heart. 7. And is there an other way leads unto life than the *ſtrait and narrow way*, yea nothing more dangerous, than to be entangled with riches, honour or pleaſures? it is utterly impoſſible to *ſerve God and mammon*. And is it not one of the moſt difficult ſteps of a chriſtian, and rareſt victories he gets, 1 *Joh.* ii. 10. *This is your victory, whereby you overcome the world?* When the native tendency thereof is ſo diſcernibly to take the heart off God, and ſavouring ſpiritual delights, to pull downward, and make a ſenſible interpoſition betwixt heaven and the ſoul; to go betwixt us and the better part, yea to deprive men of that bleſſedneſs in another world. 8. Beſides ſuch expreſs teſtimonies of the ſcripture, which are ſo full, clear and peremptor, as all may ſee what a *beacon* the Holy Ghoſt hath put on this *rock* in a ſpecial way; can any thing be more viſible through the various changes of this life, how mens intereſts in the world tend to load more, than to ſatisfy: and yeild leaſt when moſt preſſed; how rare theſe are, who are not in ſome meaſure diſcontent with their lot, and finds the beſt of outward things in their hand are not that, which they ſeemed to be at a diſtance. Yea what can the furtheſt delights of riches amount to, beyond the preſent time; where no comfortable reckoning can be on what is gone, for we are truly dead to what of our life is here paſt; and no poſſible ſecurity for one day or hour, of what is to come.

Sect. 7. It is undeniable, how much the recovery of the life and power of religion lieth this day at the door of the *miniſtry of the church*, as a ſpecial ſubſervient means thereto, and what near and undoubted connection this in all times hath with the thriving of the goſpel in any particular church. I know, there wants not an horrid party in this time, whoſe work is to decry, and caſt reproach on that excellent office and appointment of Jeſus Chriſt, which he hath given as a perpetual ſtanding ordinance for his church to the end of time: But it's not *Miniſters*, but their great *Maſter*, whoſe they are, and *holdeth the ſtars in his right-hand*, againſt whom they appear herein; and though there want not ſuch in all times, yea, remarkably at this day, than whom, none do more obſtruct the intereſt of the goſpel, and counteract the very

very end of this great office, in a ſad oppoſition of themſelves to the truth and power of godlineſs, and wound inſtead of healing, yea handle the word of the Lord deceitfully, by accommodating it to their private intereſt and deſign in a corrupt application thereof, which is not more ſad, than we may find foretold, and the church expreſly forewarned in the word of ſuch: Yet I judge this comes not under debate with all, who own the truth, that there are, I deſire to hope, not a few *miniſters and watchmen in the church of Chriſt*, whoſe greateſt aim and ſtudy is, to be found faithful to their *Maſter's* intereſt, and have a weight of that work on them, without reſpect to any outward encouragement; yea, that ſuch are in truth, and not in a ſhew *Miniſters of the New Teſtament, of the ſpirit, and not of the letter.* O what a promiſing evidence and door of hope were this to the preſent time, or any particular church, when ſuch a miniſtry is given of the Lord, of whom that account can be given.

1. That they diſcern the times, ſo as to be deeply affected with the appearances of judgment.

2. Who live much under another weight, than the diſcharge of miniſterial duties, or following that which is publick before men, in ſome ſerious exerciſe of ſpirit, about their own perſonal caſe; otherwiſe how ſad and heavy were it to be inured with practical truths, without a near and feeling converſe therewith upon their own ſoul. And as it is a great thing for a miniſter to be ſaved; ſo, to be preſſed in the trial of converſion, and the work of ſanctification on his own ſpirit, no leſs than in preſſing it on others; yea, *with fear and trembling to work out their ſalvation*, who thus ſtand accountable upon ſo great a truſt committed to them.

3. That their great ſcope in preaching is ſtill to lead into the *goſpel*, and to have all their doctrine, and holding forth of duties thus pointing, with a clear tendency to *Jeſus Chriſt*, and for an airthing the hearers unto him.

4. Such whoſe preſſure and continued exerciſe on their ſpirit is, how their miniſtry may tend to their *Maſter's* praiſe and exalting, whatever entertainment they ſhould meet with from men. And it is ſure, there is a ſhining in humility, with a much more convincing luſtre than in gifts; yea, it is ever ſeen, that the *humbleſt preachers* have been moſt inſtrumental to convert others, and not the moſt eloquent or poliſhed, who never knew brokenneſs of heart, and ſome weight of their own inward caſe.

5. Such who are kept with much ſerious dependance on the Lord in their duties. It was the ſaying of a choice miniſter of Chriſt, that he never came off with leſs comfort and more diſcontent with himſelf, than when to appearance he was beſt provided, not becauſe of his diligence, for being thus prepared, ſince that was his duty; but becauſe he was then apteſt to neglect dependance on the Lord.

6. Whoſe great and moſt weighty part in the miniſtry is to *live religion*, more than how to diſcourſe thereof; to whom preaching is not the heavieſt part of their work, nor a going about duty upon the matter, as to have their principle herein right, for that only abides, which is done for the Lord, and will have a true income of ſolid peace and joy. Such is the impreſſion on the wax, as it is on the ſeal; and it is ſure, where that holy fear and love to Jeſus Chriſt hath a deep engraving on our heart, it will make a ſuitable impreſſion on our duties.

7. I muſt add that, which hath ſo near and cloſs a connection with the fruit and ſucceſs of the miniſtry in all times, a ſerious ſtudy to have this followed *in ſecret prayer, and wreſtling before the Lord*, no leſs than in publick appearances; when it is ſo undeniable. 1. To be a fruitful and lively

miniſter can be no more, than what the Lord does make him hourly to be, and needs a new influence of the bleſſing for every new piece of his work. 2. That it is not the furtheſt advantage of gifts, or the moſt poliſhed diſcourſe, but the ſpirit of the Lord, that makes this great ſervice for the church ſucceſsful; yea, that it muſt be another key than moral perſwaſion can open the heart of the hearers. 3. That a lively frame, and to have their work prepared within, by ſome ſerious impreſſions of the truth on their own ſpirit, is found one of the moſt ſenſible advantages, both to himſelf and others, that a miniſter goes forth with in any publick appearance: Not but that a ſerious ſtudying of what is to be delivered in the matters of God, is a neceſſary duty: But O! what a promiſing token ſhould it be for better times to the church, and ſome recovery of the wonted life and power of religion, which was formerly ſo diſcernible; when the publick work of preaching is thus carried on with much of that preparatory work of ſecret *prayer*, the want whereof makes oft ſuch weak preaching, even with the moſt viſible advantage of gifts and human eloquence. And I muſt here add, how this weighty duty lies upon the hearers of the goſpel, as well as miniſters, who have any reſpect to the kingdom of Chriſt, to help forward the publick work by *ſecret prayer*; whence ſuch advantage of an open door for the word is found in ſome places more than in others, where there is a ſerious people to entertain it, and have the publick work, as well as their private caſe much on their heart.

Sect. 8. In ſo remarkable an hour of trial now on the church, what a bleſſed and hopeful means might this be, to ſee a more *near correſpondence, and unite concurrence about the work of the Lord, not only amongſt chriſtians themſelves: but particular churches*; with ſome ſerious enquiry and ſearch, what may be the provoking cauſe of this ſad over-clouding darkneſs now over the *Reformed churches*, after ſuch manifeſtations of the power and brightneſs of the goſpel to our fathers. Oh, how ſad a want is this in time of eminent hazard, that almoſt there is none found to ſtand in the breach, but *every ones hand on his loins*, and no ſtirring, or eſſay for ſome unite ſtriving together, and *contending for the truth once delivered to the ſaints*, which is ſo great a truſt on the preſent generation, not for themſelves only, but poſterity, when ſo ſore a ruin is like to fall under our hand. I confeſs, it may ſeem hopeleſs to mention ſuch a duty, when theſe impreſſions as ſometimes have been of this, are diſcernibly off the ſpirits of moſt. But I am ſure theſe preſſing arguments may be undeniable to enforce ſome conviction.

1. That the want of a publick ſpirit hath put the moſt endeared intereſts of many to be as a butt of the holy indignation of the Lord and is the ſeen cauſe, why *many ſow much, and bring in little*, with ſuch ſad perſonal grievances and complaints every where, even amongſt the Profeſſors of the truth. *Hag.* i. 9. *Why ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, becauſe of my houſe, which is waſte and deſolate, and every man runs to his own houſe.*

2. It is known, how ſingular a bleſſing hath followed ſome very hopeleſs eſſays and endeavours of a few in behalf of the truth, when there has been a falling in upon the right lith of preſent duty, to keep it alive in a remarkable hour of defection, yea, to effects above rational belief, and what ſurpriſing iſſue the improving a little ſtrength, which foreſt wreſtling have oft had, for the ſervice of the church and generation.

3. It is now clear, what a remarkable appearance is againſt the truth, how *the enemy is like to break in as a flood*, and the aſſault not from a private adverſary,

ſary, but from a publick, *unite* and *formidable* combination this day from the *Romiſh party?* And oh! are we fallen into ſuch a dead lethargy, not to be awaked to ſome more unite concurrence, upon that great intereſt of the truth, to know the condition we are in, for mutual ſympathy and upſtirring to the duties of the time, for communication of counſels, and promoting further oneneſs of heart amongſt ſuch, with whom the things of Chriſt have any weight.

4. We ſee in theſe ſuffering, and truly flouriſhing times after the Reformation, with what ſerioufneſs and advantage it was followed for mutual intercourſe, and being concerned in the publick caſe and concerns of the church, and chriſtians amongſt themſelves. What a grave enquiry was then, what tenderneſs and ſympathy amongſt the followers of the Lord, when they knew but at a diſtance the ſuffering lot of their friends? yea, with what deſire and longings to know the ſucceſs of the goſpel, and what further intereſt it did gain any where? But oh! now moſt ſeem to be only minding their own things, and how to ſecure a private intereſt, to whom theſe words may have a ſad and dreadful ſound: *Eſther* iv. 13, 14. *Think not with thy ſelf, that thou ſhalt eſcape more than all the* Jews, *for if thou holdeſt altogether thy peace at this time, then ſhall there enlargement and deliverance ariſe to the* Jews *from another place: But thou and thy father's houſe ſhall be deſtroyed.* Some may have an advantage and opportunity for improvement of themſelves beyond others in behalf of the bleeding intereſts of the church; and I have confidence to ſay, that any ſuch ſerious aim once followed ſhould be the way both of their ſtrength and encouragement, and to know that an enlarged heart for the intereſt of Chriſt, will never want a large allowance.

F I N I S.

INDEX.

A.

ADAM, how his Language was infus'd *Page* 137
Adamſon's Apoſtacy 180. The Judgments of God purſu'd him 415
Adrian, *Antoninus Pius*, and *Trajan*, Perſecutors of the Chriſtians 348
African Churches, their Decay 71
Agag and *Adonibezek*, their Puniſhments 113
Aguires, his Sufferings at *Liſle* 177
Algerius, an *Italian* Martyr 177, 381
Alva, Duke, of his Cruelty 156
Audley, his Suffering and courage 177
Angels, their Knowledge enlarg'd by their Miniſtration to the Church 297
Antichriſt, foretold in Scripture 148, *&c.* His Number of Years in reigning 154, *&c.* His final ruin near at hand 157, 327 What Signs before his coming 364
Antiochus, his Enmity to the Church 67, 173
Antoninus, a Venetian, how he ſuffer'd 176
Anabaptiſts and Antinomians, their Riſe in *Germany* 77
Apoſtacy, one remarkably puniſhed for it 113
Apoſtles, of their planting Churches 354
Appearance of an *Apoſtolic* Spirit in the laſt times 187
Apollo, his Temple deſtroy'd by Fire from Heaven 360
Arethuſius, Marquis, refus'd to build a Temple to the Idols *ibid.*
Arianiſm and Arminianiſm, their Growth 358
Ariſtides, his Apology for the Chriſtians 349
Ariſtotle, his notions of the Soul 123
Arran, Earl, kill'd in *Scotland*, by *Torthrel* 415
Aſſurance, how it is attainable from the Word 311
Atheiſm, no Argument againſt the Truth of the Scriptures 8, 9
——its Prevalency 308
Auguſtine, and other great Lights in the Church 364
Auguſtus, his peaceable reign 67
Aumale, Duke, remarkably ſlain 179

B.

Babel, how Language there confounded 137
Baden and *Bearn*, how the Monaſteries were given up there 378
Baſiliſcus and *Broadwardine*, great Lights in the Church 362
Baynam's Speech in the Flames 211
Beak, his remarkable Speech and Death 403
Bergeus, a Lawyer, his laſt Words to *Maximilian* 396, 397
Berodinus, *Gabriel*, burnt at *Cambray* 386
Beton, Cardinal, ſends the King on pilgrimage 406. Hung over the Wall as *Wiſhart* foretold 411. His Succeſſor remarkably puniſhed 186
Beza, how converted 55
Birney, Miniſter of *Aberdeen*, his laſt Words 406
Blair, his Reproof of his Fellow-Student 201. One tempted by the Devil to kill him 102. His Reproof of the Biſhop, and Anſwer of Prayer at *London* 103. His and *Bruce*'s Opinion of the Soul 125. The latter's great Succeſs in the Miniſtry 191. His Importunity in Prayer 197. His laſt Words 198. His Dream of a flying Book; and other Paſſages 415
Bohemia and *Ireland*, of the Church there 75, 76
Bombutius, in the Low Countries, his Sufferings 211
Boniface, takes the Title of *Univerſal Biſhop* 365
Bonner, Biſhop, a cruel Perſecutor *ibid.*
Boronius and *Platina*, their Records of the *Roman* Apoſtacy 366
Bradford, his Sayings at the Stake 177
Bretargh of *Lancaſhire*, her inexpreſſible Joy in God 391
Britain and *Ireland*, of the Church there 74. How reform'd from Popery 173
Burgareus, a *German* Lawyer, his laſt Words 396

C.

Calvin, *Farel*, and *Viret*, Promoters of the Reformation 184
Charles V. his Cruelty to the Duke of *Saxony* 178
Charles IX. of *France*, a bloody Perſecutor 212
Child, how one ſmil'd in the Face of its Murderer 379
Chriſt, how excellent to a converted Soul 432
Chriſtianity, a great Decay of it 309
Chriſtians, their Experience of the Truth of the Word 328. The Fervour and Love of the primitive ones great 354
Church, its ſeveral Periods 15, 16, 17. How preſerved 56, 97. Promiſes of its Preſervation 56, *&c.* Its Enlargement 59, *&c.* The Spirit to be pour'd out upon it 61. Her Deliverances 64, *&c.* Providences concerning her 66, 73. Enjoys not God's Preſence conſtantly in this World 84. Her Sufferings, *ibid.* Her Backſlidings 85, *&c.* Her Friends, how they turn Enemies 89, *&c.* Its Diviſions 93. Her Frame 126. Her Redemption 130. Her Deliverance from *Egypt* 138. Her Growth promis'd to *Abraham* and *Jacob* 139. Declin'd in *Jeremiah*'s time, *ibid.* The Appearances of Chriſt for the Church 170. Her Victory over Antichriſt 172, 382. Her Riſe and Reformation 183. Her Suffering and Prognoſtick of her Riſe 232. Ought to contend for the Truth 226. Her State in the latter Days 238, *&c.* How its Seed hath been preſerv'd 265. Remarkable Paſſages concerning the Church 351
Clobrius, a Lawyer, his laſt Words 396
Communion with God, what it is 104
Conde, Prince of, how he deſpis'd his Eſtate and Life 176
Conſcience, a ſound one, what it is 95. Terrible to wicked men 108, *&c.*
Conſtantine, a Favourer of the Church 67. Overcame *Maxentius* by his Banner 356
Contingency of Events, what they are 80, *&c.*
Converſion, a remarkable one in *Scotland* 104
Corrupt men, their Doctrine how receiv'd 303
Counſel of God, moſt ſure 241

Cranmer, Arch-Biſhop, his Courage in ſuffering *Page* 177
Culdees, their Antiquity in *Scotland* 355
Cunningham, in *Ireland*, his dying Words 404
Curæus, a *German* Phyſician, his laſt Words 394
Cyrus, his Deliverances of the Church 6, 7

D.

Daniel, how he underſtood Things to come 323
David, how juſtly puniſhed 113
Davidſon, foretells things that came to paſs 193. Renew'd the Covenant at *Aberdeen* 418
Death, how eaſy to one condemn'd to dye 437
De Bres, joyful in Priſon 177
Decrees of God, that Book, and who is worthy to looſe it 5
Diazius, how ſlain by his Brother 388
Dickſon, the Goſpel propagated by him 185
Diocleſian and *Domitian*, Enemies to the Church 61, 67
Diodorus Siculus, of *Daniel's* Prophecy 140
Diſcerning things to come 322, *&c.*
Douglas, how the Judgment of God purſu'd him 415
Duburg, *Annas*, deſpiſes Honours for the Truth 176

E.

Edward IV. of *England*, his Death 175
Elect, how they ſhall obtain 230
End of upright Men is bleſſed 121
Epicurus, his notion of the Soul 123. His Notions of the Eternity of the World 166
Eraſmus, his Tranſlation of the New Teſtament 375. His Remarks on the Perſecution 380
Error and Hereſy, of its prevailing in the Church, 78, *&c.*
Events, how made manifeſt from the Scripture, 288
Euſebius and others, of *Noah's* Religion 136
Ezra, his building of the Temple 74

F.

Faber, his Conference with the Queen of *Navarre* 104
Faith of Chriſtians, manifeſt 191
Faithfulneſs of God, conſider'd and clear'd 251. Conſider'd with reſpect to the Church 252, *&c.* Clear from the Events of his Word 315
Fanimus, an *Italian* Martyr, ſuffer'd joyfully 386
Farellus, his Letter to *Zuinglius* concerning the Perſecution 380
Farrer, ſtedfaſt even in the Flames 177
Ferdinand II. rewarded for his Cruelty 179
Ferdinando, his Sufferings, with many others 381
Figureus, his Relation of a Meſſage from the Pope and Cardinals to a Gentleman 215
Flanders, of one who had his Tongue cut out for ſinging Pſalms
Folks, Mrs. embrac'd the Stake 177
Fontius, *Bartholinus*, cruelly put to death at *Rome* 381
Forbes, a Priſoner, his Teſtimony 186
Foſter, betray'd the Aſſembly 182
France, a Field of Blood 172
Frederick of *Saxony*, ſuffer'd for the Truth 176

G.

Geneva, of the ſolemn Meeting there 378
Gentiles, their Ingathering 144, *&c.*
Germany, a Field of Blood for 20 Years 172. Croſſes of Blood appear there 373
Gifts of thoſe given under the New Teſtament, 267
Gilleſpie, Mr. *George*, ſilenc'd Mr. *Selden* 55, 56
Glover, his Trouble of Mind and Comfort after it 391. Filled with Joy at the Stake 176
God's Teſtimony and Encouragement to Chriſtians 221, 222
God, what Converſe with him is 435
God-head, of the Truth thereof 50
Gorgius, the Arian at *Alexandria* 359
Goſpel, its Succeſs in the laſt times 173. Its different Effects on Men 267. Very powerful at times 269. Evidences of its Glory 337. 'Tis at firſt very ſucceſsful 341. Its Progreſs ſince the Reformation 383
Grace, its Doctrine, how deſpiſed 330. Mens Enmity againſt efficacious Grace 299, *&c.*
Gregory's Speech againſt the Patriarch of *Conſtantinople* 367
Guiſe, Duke of, his miſerable End 179
Guſtavus Adolphus, King of *Sweden*, his appearing for the Church 172

H.

Haman, an Enemy to the Church 67
Hamilton
Harwin, how he ſuffer'd for the Truth 388
Hawkes, how he ſuffer'd 387
Heathen Writers, what they ſay of Chriſt 346, 347
Henderſon, Mr. *Alexander*, convinced by Mr. *Bruce's* preaching 191
Henry VIII. of *England*, declar'd againſt the Pope 214
Henries II. and III. of *France*, their miſerable End 178
Henry IV. of *France*, how he was ſtabb'd 179
Herwin, his Sufferings in the *Low Countries* 176
Heſſe, Landgrave of, appears for the Church 173, *&c.*
Hudſon, ſuffers joyfully 176
Hunter, ſtedfaſt even to Death *ibid.*
Huſs and *Jerom* of *Prague*

I.

Jehu, his Houſe puniſhed with Blood 70
Jeruſalem, Judgments of God upon it 344
Jews, three Impoſtors follow'd by them 363
Jewiſh Church, of their Time and State 251
Images ſuddenly broken down 213
Inquiſition, *Spaniſh*, its Cruelty 380
John the Divine, his Revelations own'd by the Council of *Toledo* 364
Joſephus and *Berolus*, their Account of the Religion of the Antediluvians 136
Joſephus, his Teſtimony of Chriſt and *John* the Baptiſt 340
Joſias, his extraordinary Death 75
Ireland, how the Goſpel flouriſh'd there 185. A young Woman there that could not be hurt by a Sword 208
———of Hypocrites in the Church there 436
Iriſh, their Cruelty rewarded 179. A Gentlewoman and her three Children cruelly uſed by them 208

Julian the Apostate, his Attempts to build the Temple miraculously hinder'd 360
Juliano, his Sufferings for printing the Bible 380
Junius, his Conversion 103
Justin Martyr, and *Eusebius*, of the Christian Persecution 348

K.

Kennedy, *Hugh*, his Eminency in Prayer 196
Ker, how he succeeded Mr. *Davidson* 193

L.

Latomus, an Instance of God's Judgments 109
Leyden, how deliver'd from the *Spaniards* 213
Life spiritual, how excellent 51, 52
Light of the Church, how great in the latter Days 287
Light, the Evil and Danger of sinning against Light 44, *&c.*
Lord's Day, of it in the Gentile Church 347
Luther, an eminent Instrument of the Reformation 73, 184. Writes against Indulgences 173. Excommunicated by the Pope 174. His Notion of the Sacrament 175. His appearing for the Truth 376. And against the Pope's Indulgences 378. His Letters of Comfort to *Melancthon* 381

M.

Macbryar, a Troubler of the Godly, how killed 123
Macklewrath comforted in Prayer, and his Memory restor'd
Mahometanism and Popery grew up together 98. The Rise and Absurdity of it 373
Man, how glorious before the Fall 98
Martyr *Peter*, his Losses for Religion 377
Mary Queen, a great Persecutor 156. Her Persecutions in *England* 175
Massacre in *France*, an Account of it 175
Maximus, persecutes the Church 71
Melancthton, his Saying concerning the Church 86 He and others instruments of the Reformation 184
Melvil, Mr. *Andrew*, his Imprisonment 195. How he read the Articles of the Reformation 418
Messias, Old Testament propheſies concerning him 141. The Time of his coming foretold 339
Mill, burned at St. *Andrews* 413
Ministers of *Ireland*, meet with a Storm at Sea 216
Ministers, of their Power to promote Religion 440
Monarchies, their Rise and Fall 140
Montanus, of his writing the New Testament 374
Morton, Earl of, his Fall *ibid.*
Moreta, an *Italian* Lady, her Conversion and last Words 399
Mossilanus, his Speech before his Death 375
Munsterus, a Lawyer, his last Words 395
Murder remarkable Discoveries of it 115
Murray, Earl of, contends with the Queen's Party 413
Musculus, his Sufferings for Truth 377

N.

NAme of God, how near it is 296
Natural Men, how ignorant they are 267
Nebuchadnezzar, an Enemy to the Church 67
Nehemiah, call'd to build the Temple
Nero, persecutes the Church 67, 346
Nicholson, turn'd Bishop, and *Lindsey*'s Lines on him 181
Nice, a Heathen Philosopher confuted there 360
Nicene Council and Creed, concerning them *ibid.*

O.

Olivarius, an Instance of God's Judgments 109
Orange, Prince of, appear'd for the Church 172
Oracles of God, committed to the Church 288
Oracles of the Heathen, how they ceased 345
Origin, guilty of Error 72
Ormistone, made large Offers for Mr. *Wishart*'s Life 450
Otho, joyful at Death 177

P.

Paul, an Example of Grace 100
Pelagianism, when it appear'd 362
Perkins, his Ministry bless'd with Conversion 102
Persecutors, great, often the greatest 87, *&c.*
Pharaoh, his Enmity to the Church 67
Phocas, a Saying of a great Man in his time 87
Philip II. of *Spain*, Author of the Inquisition 178
Piedmont, how the Protestants defended themselves there 113
Pilat, of his killing himself 351
Pitsligo in *Aberdeen-shire*, a Lady's Remark on *Huntley*'s Death 313
Plinius junior, his Letter to *Trajan* 349
Plutarch, of Spirits 117
Poland, and other Countries, of the Gospel spreading there 113
Popery, of its Destruction 330
Popish Cruelty, very great 379. Popish Supremacy, and of a Woman being Pope 350. Ceremonies, and the Promoters of 'em discours'd of 350, *&c.*
Prayer, its great Prevalency 53, *&c.* Prayer and Conference Duties 228
Prelacy, contrary to Scripture 419, *&c.*
Principles of Wisdom, from the Scripture 317, *&c.*
Printing, when invented 374
Promises in general, consider'd 26. And Promises in particular 28, *&c.*
Prophecies and Promises of the flourishing of the Church 161. Prophecies yet to be fulfill'd 165
Prosperity, of its following bad Men 96

Q.

Quadratus his Apology for the Christians 349

R.

REformation, what Difficulties were in the way 376. 'Twas the Ruin of *Satan*'s Kingdom 388
Reformed Churches, their Growth 329
Religion of the old World, decay'd before the Flood 136. What Religion is, in its Practice 433
Riceto, Offers made to him for changing his Religion 381
Ridley, his Letter to *Bradford* 385
Righteous and wicked, one Event in this Life 96
Righteous Man, his Excellency 105
Rodolphus, his Knowledge of the Scriptures 374
Rollock, his last Words 438
Romish Darkness, foretold in Scripture 279. Its Increase 368, *&c.*
Rutherford, his last Words 187

S.

SAints, their Bleſſedneſs prov'd from Scripture 5. Supports in Trouble 106. Patience and Sufferings 175. They witneſs to the Scriptures 262. How of one Mind 266
Salvian, his Obſervation of the Church 74
Samuel, Robert, his Joy in ſuffering 386
Sanders, his Joy at the Stake 177
Satan, of his being bound, and the Saints reign with Chriſt 162. His laſt Aſſault 164. Gains Ground with little Noiſe 254
Saxony, Duke of, appears for the Church 74
Scavala, his Zeal againſt the Maſs, and Sufferings 386
Schrymger, his Anſwer of Prayer for his Daughter 405
Scot, ——— his laſt Words 404
Scriptures, their Accompliſhment 1, *&c.* Concerning the Church 4. Their Accompliſhment a Proof of the Faithfulneſs and Power of God 5. Make manifeſt God's Way with the Church 6, 7. Their Certainty proved from Chriſtian Converſation 7, 8. Their Delightfulneſs 12. What Prophecies in them already accompliſh'd 136---157. What to be accompliſh'd 157, *&c.* Verifi'd by Events 188. Their Excellency 258. Antiquity 152. Authority 364
Scotland, Remorſe of Conſcience in one for accuſing a Miniſter there 182. The Parliament rebuk'd by the Judgment of God 216. *John* of the *Score* a Robber there 218. The Sufferings of that Church, and Victory 414, 423, *&c.* The Reformation and Difficulties of it 406. How two Gentlemen in *Scotland* acknowledg'd the Guilt of their perſecuting the People there 425. The Truth greatly prevailed there 426. That Church both in Proſperity and Adverſity 428
Seal and Witneſs of the Spirit, what it is 223, *&c.*
Sega and *Spinola*, of their Death 38
Shots in *Scotland*, the great Succeſs of the Goſpel at a Communion there 185
Sharrina, Simon, how ſtruck dumb 361
Simpſon, his Prayer for his Wife, and Anſwer 194
Solemn League and Covenant, when it was made 186
Soul, its Immortality 122
Spaniſh Armado, how defeated 212
Spira, and other Inſtances of God's Judgments *ibid.*
Spirits and Fairies, of their haunting Houſes 388. The Familiarity of Spirits with Men 115
Spotſwood, Biſhop, his Grandeur, and Mr. *Welſh*'s Prophecy of him 181
Stewart, his faithful Miniſtry in *Ireland*
Stewart, Provoſt of *Air*, his Prayers and Charity 107
Sufferings for Chriſt, Joy in it 385
Suffolk, Dutcheſs of, quits her Eſtate and Country 176
Sweden, King of, defended the Reformation 212
Sylvius, his Relation concerning *John Huſs* and *Jerom* of *Prague* 370

T.

Tacitus and *Juvenal*, of the Sufferings of the Chriſtians 374
Taubmannus, his laſt Words 397
Temptations from *Satan*, what they are 24
Tertullian, not free from Error 72. His Account of the Sufferings of the Chriſtians 347
Teſtament New, God's Appearances for his Church under that Diſpenſation 335
Thallas and *Tertullian*, their Teſtimony of Chriſt 347
Theodoſius, obtain'd a Victory by Prayer 362
Thuan, his Remarks on the Perſecution 380
Threatnings in general, conſider'd 40. Alſo Threatnings in particular 41, *&c.*
Tim, a Witneſs in Queen *Mary*'s Perſecutions 177
Tindal, hinder'd a Magician at *Antwerp* from acting 389
Titus, an Enemy of the Church 6, 7
Trajan, his Confeſſion concerning the Prayers of the Chriſtians 349
Truth, of the laſt Times plain from Scripture 294 What Truths yet to be accompliſhed *ibid.* Truth of the Scripture how needful to be known 310. How Victorious Truth is 387. Truths of God, their Excellency 432

V.

Valdenſes, adhere to the Truth 369
Vergerius, how an Inſtance of Grace 100, 211
Veſpaſian, his Offer of Peace to *Jeruſalem* 148
Vico, Marquis of, converted by *Peter Martyr* 214 Quits all for the Truth 390
Veſſenbechius, a Lawyer, his laſt Words 398

W.

Ward and *Wickliffe*, appear againſt Popery 370
Waſtria, a bloody Man, his Converſion 217
Weems, his Saying of Mr. *Bruce* 192
Welſh, his Teſtimony when a Priſoner 186. His Miniſtry at *Kirkubright* 188. His Prophecies and Baniſhment 190. Foretold the Plague in *Scotland* 198. A Priſoner in *Edinburgh*, and his Behaviour there 199. His Journey to *Aberdeen* 416. His Sufferings and Death 407, *&c.*
Weymar, Duke of, appears for the Church 172
Wiſhart, his great Succeſs in preaching 184. His Sufferings and laſt Words at the Stake 177, 407. Inſtrumental in *Reath*'s Converſion 204
Word, Practice of it profitable 314
World, the Love of it dangerous 439

X.

Xenophon, Beroſus, and *Herodotus* 140

Z.

Zeroton, quits his Eſtate for the Goſpel 176
Zerubabel, call'd to build the Temple 74
Zuinglius and *Oecolampadius* eminent in the Reformation 184, 369
Zurick, the Maſs aboliſh'd there 378

The END.

BOOKS printed for and sold by JOHN OSWALD, at the *Bible* in *White*'s Alley *Chancery-Lane.*

BOOKS in *FOLIO.*

CHRIST Crucified: Or, the Marrow of the Gospel evidently set forth in seventy two Sermons on the liiid Chapter of *Isaiah.* By the late Reverend Mr. *James Durham.* Price Bound in Calves Leather twelve Shillings.

BOOKS in *QUARTO.*

Clavis Cantici: Or, an Exposition of the Song of *Solomon.* By the late Reverend Mr. *James Durham.* Recommended by Dr. *John Owen:* Price Bound four Shillings.

BOOKS in *DUODECIMO.*

Sacramental Meditations on the Sufferings and Death of Christ: In which the Humiliation or Sufferings of Christ in his Birth, in his Life, before at and after his Death; with the End of his Sufferings and the Sacramental Promise, is considered: Being the Substance of some Sermons preached before the Sacrament. By Mr. *Daniel Campbell.* Price Bound one Shilling.

A Poetical Paraphrase on the whole Book of *Jonah:* With Cuts Inscrib'd to Mr. *Isaac Watts.* To which is added other Poetical Paraphrases on several other Places of Scripture. Price one Shilling.

N. B. The following BOOKS are likewise sold at the above-mentioned Place; *viz.*

Some fine *Field*'s Bibles.

Durham's Expositions on the Revelations and on the Ten Commandments.

Rutherford's Letters, and other of his Works.

Gillespie on the Covenant.

Mr. *Wishart* on the Attributes. Two Volumes in *Octavo*: Price Bound and Letter'd on the Back, seven Shillings.

Dunlop's Sermons: Two Volumes in *Octavo,* Price Bound ten Shillings.

Mr. *Halyburton*'s Life. Price Bound two Shillings.

Campble's Sermons on the Catechise. With an Appendix of War with the Devil. Price Bound one Shilling and Six-pence: And many other Books by *Scotch* Authors.